Plotinus on What We Think We Are

WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK

STUDIES IN PLATONISM, NEOPLATONISM, AND THE PLATONIC TRADITION

BRILL

Plotinus on What We Think We Are

Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition

Edited by

Robert M. Berchman (*Foro di Studi Avanzati Gaetano Massa, Roma*)
John F. Finamore (*University of Iowa*)

Editorial Board

John Dillon (*Trinity College, Dublin*) – Gary Gurtler (*Boston College*)
Jean-Marc Narbonne (*Laval University, Canada*)

VOLUME 34

The titles published in this series are listed at *brill.com/spnp*

Plotinus on What We Think We Are

By

Wiebke-Marie Stock

BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Stock, Wiebke-Marie, author.
Title: Plotinus on what we think we are / by Wiebke-Marie Stock.
Other titles: Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic tradition ; v. 34.
Description: Leiden ; Boston : Brill, 2024. | Series: Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic tradition, 1871-188X ; volume 34 | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "The Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus invites us to take part in his philosophizing when he encourages his readers to think about what they think they are, as living beings, human beings, as rational beings, ethical subjects and as philosophers. He is interested in what we say about ourselves in ordinary language and notices that such ordinary experience conflicts with what the Platonic tradition claims we (truly) are. This conflict does not lead him to turn away from the human terms and expressions, but impels him to take seriously what we say about ourselves and to explain it philosophically"– Provided by publisher.
Identifiers: LCCN 2024036312 (print) | LCCN 2024036313 (ebook) | ISBN 9789004678644 (hardback) | ISBN 9789004678651 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Plotinus. | Philosophical anthropology. | Self (Philosophy) | Metaphysics. | Neoplatonism.
Classification: LCC B693.Z7 S76 2024 (print) | LCC B693.Z7 (ebook) | DDC 186/.4–dc23/eng/20240813
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2024036312
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2024036313

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: “Brill”. See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1871-188X
ISBN 978-90-04-67864-4 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-67865-1 (e-book)
DOI 10.1163/9789004678651

Copyright 2024 by Wiebke-Marie Stock. Published by Koninklijke Brill BV, Leiden, The Netherlands.
Koninklijke Brill BV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.
Koninklijke Brill BV reserves the right to protect this publication against unauthorized use. Requests for re-use and/or translations must be addressed to Koninklijke Brill BV via brill.com or copyright.com.

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

Contents

Preface VII

Introduction 1
1 Soul 3
2 "We"—Self, I, Person? 6
3 Methodology 11
4 Plan 14

1 Plotinus on the "We"—with, against and beyond Plato 17

2 Each Individual One of Us 21
1 Soul and Composite Being 21
2 Mine, Yours, Ours 26
3 Individuality 31
4 We Living Beings 34

3 We as Ethical Subject 38
1 Our Proper Activity 38
2 Masters of Ourselves 47
3 We, the Sage 57

4 The Location of the We 66
1 The One and "We" 66
2 Our Intellect 72

5 We as the Center of Consciousness 79
1 Inner Consciousness 79
2 Unconscious to Us 85
3 The *daimôn* and "We" 91
4 Consciousness 94
5 Memory 96

6 We Are Double 104
1 Who Are We? 104
2 The God in Us 108
3 We and the Image of the Soul 110
4 The Passions and We 113

7 **We Philosophers** 117

8 **We Are Multiple** 125
1 Soul and Body 125
2 We Perceivers 129
3 We Are Most of All There 132
4 We Are Multiple 135
5 We Are Double 138
6 Consciousness 141
7 We or the Soul? 144

Conclusion 147

Bibliography 151
1 Editions of Plotinus' *Enneads* 151
2 Translations of Plotinus' *Enneads* 151
3 Ancient Authors 152
4 Secondary Literature 155
Index of Ancient Sources 174
Index of Names and Subjects 182

Preface

The question of what "we" are started to intrigue me when I first began to work on Plotinus. A "Habilitationsschrift" on this topic at the University of Bonn, Germany, entitled "Was *wir* sind. Plotin über die Seele und ihr Schattenbild" ("What *we* are. Plotinus on the Soul and its Shadow") is the background for the current volume, which has taken a significant new tack: I realized that the question I was interested in was less what we *are* according to Plotinus, but what we *think* we are, throughout the vivid and dynamic process of philosophizing which challenges every reader to take part in the investigation of how we conceive of ourselves and of our various aspects and tasks, in the sensible world and in the return to the intelligible realm. "We" is no settled condition but an ongoing philosophical process.

I would like to thank the organizations which supported my research during this time: the Thyssen Foundation for their support of short term research stays in Paris, Dublin and Geneva; the Martin Buber Society of Fellows for a year at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel); the Alexander von Humboldt for a fellowship to work at the University of Notre Dame (USA) and for a return fellowship at the University of Bonn (Germany); the Gerda Henkel-Foundation for research stays at the University of Bonn and the University of Notre Dame. Furthermore, I would like to thank a number of colleagues at many institutions who discussed my work with me, during research stays and at conferences, especially John Dillon, Andrew Smith, Philippe Hoffmann, Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete, Christoph Horn, Theo Kobusch, Gretchen Reydams-Schils, David O'Connor, Stephen Gersh and Sean Kelsey.

Finally, I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions, and, of course, the editors of the series John Finamore and Robert Berchman.

South Bend, January 2024
Wiebke-Marie Stock

Introduction

> There is a good deal to be said in our present circumstances for a form of Platonism which will lead us into, at times rather puzzled and hesitant, conversations with William Blake and other poetic and imaginative persons, as against one which will conduct us in a stately logical progress into the lecture-room of the late Dr. Thomas Aquinas or the late Professor Hegel.[1]

In his *Enneads*, the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus invites us to take part in his philosophizing. He keeps the dialogic, oral origin of his texts before us. A student's question seems at times to redirect the discussion. We feel the process of developing philosophical terminology and ideas. Certainly, Plotinus is interested in coming to conclusions, and he never has Plato's texts and questions far from his thoughts; but like Aristotle, Plotinus considers ordinary language, the ways humans frame their understanding, as a prompt for philosophical investigations.

The investigation into what "we" are draws Plotinus to consider how we use the word "we" (*hêmeis*). The traditional Platonic answer to this question of human identity was the soul, or to be precise, the rational soul. According to Plato's *Phaedo* all our attention should be directed to the soul, the rational soul, and not to the body. The Platonic or Pseudo-Platonic *Alcibiades 1* underlines that "we" are not to be identified with the body or the whole human being, but strictly with the soul (128d–130c). In the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus*, Plato presents the soul as tripartite and not as uniform, but he still underscores the importance of the rational part of the soul. This is what rules over the lower parts of the soul.

Plotinus has a more complex answer. He does not forego the idea of an immortal soul that is supposed to return to the higher intelligible world, but he develops a more complex idea of what human beings are as embodied beings. "We" are not merely what "we truly are," i.e. a "rational soul" or for Plotinus even "our intellect," but as beings in this world "we" are a composite sentient being whose functions are in important ways tied to our bodies.[2] The lower functions and the body belong to "us." The ultimate goal is, of course, to return to the intelligible realm, but Plotinus' interest in what "we" are here in this world, as human

1 Armstrong 1990, 178–179.

2 Cf. O'Daly 1973, 30: "the realm of emotion, of passion is integrated into the definition of the self."

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_002

beings, as embodied beings, is more than the interest of someone who wants to instigate the ascent, but also that of an observer who wants to understand how the soul works in this world. There is, for Plotinus, a difference between what "we" are and what "we truly" are, and it is important to consider what "we" are in this more open sense even thought the final goal is to return to what "we truly" are.

However, Plotinus' acceptance of the psychophysical reality of human beings is only one part of the innovations implicit in or dependent from his new terminology. In considering our embedded nature and our differing functions and experiences, Plotinus also opens up the subject of "consciousness." What "we" are cannot be an issue of an objectifying definition of human beings, but must inevitably and essentially involve and address subjective consciousness.[3] What "we" are depends on the focus of our consciousness: intellect, soul, emotion and maybe even body.

This line of thought responds to Plotinus' own development of a general theory of the soul, which both combines and then enlarges Platonic and Aristotelian ideas. Admittedly at times the concept of the soul seems strained to the point of breaking, since it reaches from the lowest level of the intelligible realm down to the level of vegetative life, but the notion of "we" allows Plotinus to focus on certain features of all that is soul. More importantly, this new idea is developed in response to the tension between the Platonic tradition and everyday experience and language. Plotinus is clearly interested in what we say about ourselves in ordinary language;[4] he notices that such ordinary experience conflicts with what the Platonic tradition claims "we" (truly) are. This conflict does not lead him to turn away from the human terms and expressions, but impels him to take seriously what we say about ourselves and to explain it philosophically.

In this introduction, I briefly present Plotinus' theory of the soul which is the basis for an understanding of the "we" (*hêmeis*), then discuss this notion before making some remarks on Plotinus' methodology which will guide the investigation in this book.

---

3 Cf. Remes 2022, 241: "we are conscious beings for whom it is possible to ask a further question of 'who are we?' "

4 Contra Morel who assumes that Plotinus just points out "l'imprécision du langage commun" (Morel 1999, 62). Cf., on the other hand, O'Daly 2017, 145: "appealing at once to common sense and to the way we talk of affections."

1 Soul

Soul is the "linchpin"[5] in the Plotinian cosmos.[6] It is the third level—by some, but not Plotinus, called the third *hypostasis*—after the One (*hen*) and Intellect (*nous*); it belongs to the intelligible world, but stands at the border of the sensible world.[7] It comes from Intellect and through it from the One. Soul itself, *pasa psychê*, is soul insofar as it is the third level after the One and Intellect. From this soul stem the world-soul (*psychê tou pantos*), that is the soul which gives life to the cosmos, and also individual souls; furthermore, he sometimes mentions souls of stars.[8] Soul itself is soul insofar as it is not connected to a body while world-soul and individual souls are connected to their respective bodies[9]—to a perfect body in the case of the world-soul while lower souls work with lesser bodies.

Human souls are immortal and will be reincarnated.[10] Since all souls belong to the intelligible world (the upper, matterless, perfect world), their descent into the visible world constitutes a problem. Why come down? Why be connected to a body? After all, for all of us down here the ascent away from the visible world remains desirable.[11] Plotinus says that the soul is "unchangeable," but he also suggest that there must be some "boldness and desire for individuation" when he tells a myth about the descent of the soul (V 1 [10] 1, 1–9).[12] And yet, Plotinus clearly opposes the Gnostics and their ideas on the fall of the soul.[13] In treatise IV 8 [6], Plotinus combines seemingly contradictory passages in Plato about the soul in the body, that is the passage in which the sensible

5 Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 18.

6 On the soul cf. especially Blumenthal 1971a; Karfík 2014; Caluori 2015; Emilsson 2017, 144–184.

7 Cf. O'Meara 1993; Gerson 1994; Emilsson 2017, 37–143 regarding Plotinus' metaphysical constructions. On the Intellect cf. especially Emilsson 2007, and, on the One, Beierwaltes 1985; Bussanich 1996.

8 On the world-soul cf. Blumenthal 1971b; Caluori 2015, 112–120; Caluori 2020. On souls and stars cf. Dillon 2003; Adamson 2008; Caluori 2015, 120–125.

9 On this distinction cf. Blumenthal 1971b; Gurtler 1988, 24–30; Dufour 2006.

10 Cf. Rich 1957; Laurent 1999b; Stock 2020, 66–70.

11 Cf. on ascent and descent Schuhl 1973; O'Brien 1977; Schuhl 1976. Furthermore, the topics of matter and evil are closely connected to that of the descent and ascent of the soul. Cf. Rist 1961; O'Brien 1971; O'Brien 1981; O'Brien 1990; O'Brien 1999; Narbonne 2011, 79–95 (Study 3); Laurent 1999a, 23–52 (Chapt. 1). On the soul's origin in the One and its return to the One cf. Beierwaltes 2002.

12 Remes 2008b, 114.

13 Cf. Jonas 1971; Puech 1960; Tardieu 1992; Katz 1954; Alt 1990; Borodai 2003; Dillon 1980; Narbonne 2011.

world is described as a prison, and the idea of the forthcoming of soul, i.e. not a descent, but a stepping forth which perfects the cosmos. Plotinus' solution gives preference to the positive view of the cosmos.[14] Soul is an amphibian being which can and has to live both in the intelligible and in the sensible realm.[15]

This human soul is not a uniform entity but has several functions and faculties. Plotinus here adds his own ideas to the Platonic and Aristotelian distinctions he has combined. Thus he makes use both of the Platonic distinction between the rational faculty of the soul and the two lower faculties (*thumos* and *epithumia*) and of Aristotle's distinction of the vegetative, the sensitive and the rational soul.[16] He often speaks about a higher, middle and lower soul.[17] Plotinus discusses the vegetative functions of the soul, and perception, passions, emotions, but also memory and imagination, rational thought and consciousness.[18] Further, for Plotinus, soul is more than the functions it exercises in the sensible realm. It never leaves the intelligible realm completely. Plotinus writes that the One, Intellect and Soul are in us[19] and the intelligible cosmos is in us,[20] and he claims that the soul does not descend completely, "against the opinion of others,"[21] i.e. either against other Platonic philosophers or against the Gnostics.[22] Most later Neoplatonists criticized him for this theory and assumed that the soul needed theurgy to ascend,[23] but it is essential

14 Cf. D'Ancona 2003; Stock 2016a.

15 Cf. IV 8 [6] 4, 31–35. Cf. Schniewind 2005.

16 Aristotle distinguishes in *De an*. II, 4, 415a17 between three faculties: *noêtikon*, *aisthetikon*, *threptikon*. Other passages list more faculties, for instance II, 2, 413b12–13. (*threptikon*, *aisthêtikon*, *dianoêtikon*, *kinêsis*); II, 3, 414a31 f. (*threptikon*, *aisthêtikon*, *kinêtikon kata topon*, *dianoêtikon*); II, 3, 414b19 mentions both the *dianôetikon* and the *nous*. On Plotinus' combination and transformation cf. Rist 1967a; Blumenthal 1976; Karamanolis 2006; Karfík 2014.

17 Cf. Rist 1967a, 416.

18 On the embodied soul and its functions cf. Caluori 2022. On the topics of memory, imagination and consciousness cf. Schwyzer 1960; Warren 1964; Warren 1965; Warren 1966; Blumenthal 1976; Smith 1978; Dillon 1986; Schroeder 1987; Gurtler 1988, 49–90; 141–160 and pass.; Gerson 1997; Moutsopoulos 2000; Rizzerio 2003; Stern-Gillet 2006, 145–161; D'Ancona 2007; Taormina 2011; Hutchinson 2011; Schroeder 2012, 153–159; Stock 2014; Stern-Gillet 2017; Hutchinson 2018; Berchman 2021, 161–200; Stock 2024a (forthcoming).

19 V 1 [10] 10, 5–12.

20 Cf. III 4 [15] 3, 22; 6, 22–23. Cf. Stock 2020, 70–72.

21 IV 8 [6] 8, 1 (Fleet). Cf. also below p. 83.

22 On the higher, non-descended soul cf. especially IV 8 [6] 8, 14. Cf. Hadot 1980; Szlezák 2000; Rist 1967a; Steel 1978, 34–38. On Plotinus' opponents cf. Puech 1960; Jonas 1971; O'Brien 1993; Narbonne 2011.

23 Cf. Dodds 1963, 309–310; Rist 1967a, 415; Steel 1978, 38–51; Dillon 2005; Remes 2008b, 115–118; Stang 2019; Stock 2020, 72note160.

for Plotinus' thought that the soul never loses the connection to the intelligible realm and can ascend on its own.

Plotinus' rethinking of the soul—connected to the body, changing its focus and functions, yet retaining its connection and ability to return to the intelligible cosmos—impels him through various disciplines: ethics, metaphysics, anthropology, biology, epistemology, the theory of emotions, and aesthetics. The Aristotelian definition of soul as the "first actuality of a natural body potentially possessing life"[24] provided an anthropological-biological interest in the diverse functions of soul. But when Plotinus regards soul as the third level of the intelligible universe, his focus moves to metaphysics and ontology. The idea of a purification of the soul turns towards ethics. Epistemology and the theory of emotions come into play when Plotinus discusses memory, imagination, discursive and intellective thought. Since soul is also the organ which perceives beauty, aesthetics—in a broad sense—is at issue. Blumenthal writes of the "paradox" that "Plotinus' soul was, like Plato's, separate from and, ideally, opposed to the body, but worked like Aristotle's which was by definition the body's essence."[25] Or, as Gurtler phrases it: according to a "Platonic view" the "soul is not where it should be" whereas it "is exactly where it should be" according to Aristotle.[26] Plotinus seems to be asking too much of the category of the soul, as if he tried to ascribe to it too many contradictory tasks and responsibilities: "The Plotinian Soul is always in danger of splitting apart, into two, or even three, entities."[27] But it is essential for Plotinus that all these functions and tasks come from one and the same source and are not split up. However, both the notion of the "we" and that of the "image of the soul" help Plotinus deal with the strained concept of the soul. The "image of the soul" comprises the lower faculties of the soul which are ascribed not to soul itself, but to an image or trace.[28] Yet, while the notion of

24 Aristoteles, *De an.* II, 1 412a27–28 (Hett): ἡ ψυχή ἐστιν ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ δυνάμει ζωὴν ἔχοντος. Cf. also Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De an.* 16,10; 21,4 f.; 24,1–3.

25 Blumenthal 1976, 42. On the combination of Platonic and Aristotelian elements cf. Blumenthal 1971a, 134–140. On the complex nature of the soul in Plotinus cf. Karfík 2014, 107; Caluori 2022, 220.

26 Gurtler 1997, 222.

27 Dillon 1969, 26.

28 On this topic cf. Tornau 1998, 280, 283–284, 315; Kalligas 2000; Dillon 2013; Caluori 2015, 186–192; Kalligas 2012; Noble 2013; Tornau 2016; Stock 2016b; Emilsson 2017, 228–268. Some authors (Caluori, Noble, Emilsson) suggest that Plotinus distinguished between a trace and the image, i.e. a trace (vegetative functions, maybe stemming from the world-soul) and an image which encompasses the lower functions of the individual soul. For a different reading of the issue cf. Taormina 2020.

the image seeks to find an objective description, the notion of the "we" finds a very different answer, which involves subjective consciousness. However, as we will see, more than once these two attempts also come together in surprising ways.

2 "We"—Self, I, Person?

Ancient philosophical thought about the soul was a mature but hardly a settled field. Plotinus moves away from Plato's clear definition of the "true human being" as the soul when he introduces a new concept, *hêmeis*, which allows him to discuss the complex nature of human beings.[29] Instead of treating "human nature and its ontological basis" Plotinus asks a "more reflexive and dynamic question: who are we?"[30] Modern scholars have responded by discussing the notions of the ego, the person, the subject, consciousness and especially the self.[31] Plotinus is said to have a concept of the self even without a dedicated term (instead he uses such words as *hêmeis*, *autos* or *heautou*).[32] However, in

29 Cf. for instance Bréhier 1999, 68.

30 Remes 2008b, 100. Cf. Warren 1964, 92 ("objective, ontological entity" and the "bearer of subjective experience") and 94 ("Ontologically, [...] the self appears as fragmented [...] subjectively, it always preserves its unity in the content of experience").

31 "Ich" (Himmerich 1965, 495; Himmerich 1959, 92–100); "ego" (Dodds in the discussion of Schwyzer 1960, 385; Dodds 1960, 5 where he speaks of a "vital distinction between the total personality (ψυχή) and the ego-consciousness (ἡμεῖς);" Rist 1967a, 414, 417, 420–422; Mamo 1976, 201; Smith 1978, 293); "moi" (Hadot 1997, 23–44; Hadot 1980, 245–247, 261; Szlezák 2000, 178; Trouillard 2011, 26; Ham 2000, 116–117); "sujet" (Aubry 2008; Aubry 2004; Ham 2000, esp. 116–123. Schniewind 2003, 102, note 1); "human subject" (Bolton 1994 speaks of "person," "identity" and "self," but does not mention *hêmeis*); "quel 'noi'—il soggetto cosciente" (D'Ancona 2007); consciousness (Schibli 1989, 215; Armstrong 1973, 14–16); "person" (Rappe 1996, 250, 268; Rappe 2000, 67–90; Hutchinson 2018, 69); "self" (O'Daly 1973, 20: "using the term for 'self'—*hêmeis*—which he himself [i.e. Plotinus] has coined.") Cf. the slightly different interpretation: Armstrong 1940, 34–47 (on Armstrong's ideas about the "infinite self" cf. below p. 70, note 13); Rist 1967b, 153–168; Gerson 1994, 139. Cf. also Remes 2007, 3; Remes 2008a; Armstrong 1976; Atkinson 1983, 246; Schibli 1989, 215, note 29; Clark 1991, 230–231; Rappe 1996; Rappe 2000, 67–90; Sorabji 2000, 294; Ousager 2004 ("selfhood" appears in the title, but the concept barely plays a role in the book); Gurtler 2005; Sorabji 2006, 118–126; Mortley 2013; Remes 2008b, 99–133 ("Human being and the self"); Aubry 2014; Adamson 2015, 211–212; Emilsson and Strange 2015, 196; Emilsson 2017, 285–293; Long 2015; Banner 2017; Stang 2019 ("the doubled self"); Aubry 2020. Cf. also my discussion of the issue in Stock 2024c.

32 Cf. O'Daly 1973, 89–90; Gerson 1994, 139; Warren 1964, 92. On issues with the term "self" and the fact that *autos* is a pronoun and not a noun in Greek cf. Schroeder 1986b, 337.

addition to the problem that no single Greek term denotes "self," the concept itself is not clear.[33] It seems to be something interior, the inner human being,[34] but this does not explain how Plotinus' notion is distinct from Plato's ideas on the inner true human being. The notions of "self," "ego," or "personality"[35] suggests that this might be about "a person's identity."[36] Other investigators have pointed out that Plotinus is not really interested in individuality[37] nor in "biography," but in the "inner life"[38] and in what "he takes to apply to human beings generally."[39] Yet, Plotinus certainly also wants to explain how souls differ from each other.[40] Should we identify the "self" with the "middle soul"[41] or with the "individual soul"?[42] Should it be placed where discursive thought takes place, between the sensible and the intellective?[43] Should we distinguish between an ordinary and a true self?

The variety of statements about what "we" are has let, mostly, to two kinds of interpretations. Some authors assume that there are different forms or levels of self, a lower and a higher, the lower embodied self of the life in this world and the higher self to which we should return. Another group of scholars underlines the mobile focus of consciousness, that is not a permanent development back to the true self and the intelligible world, but a shift of focus the self can accomplish in this world here.

The first approach has distinguished two levels of the self, a historical, embodied, empirical self and a true, transcendent, ideal, intelligible self.[44] The

---

33 Cf. Gerson 1994, 139.

34 Cf. Markschies 1998; Markschies 1994; Markschies 1995.

35 Cf. Blumenthal 1978, 407; Dillon 2016, 309.

36 Blumenthal 1971a, 109. Wolfe 2010, 216: "So when I seek to know myself I am to ask not only what it is to be human but also what it is for me to be the particular human being that I am." Vassilopoulou 2021, 634 speaks of the soul's "identity as an individual human self." Cf. Remes 2008a, 168. Gurtler 1988 often speaks about "personal identity" (for instance 190–191).

37 Cf. for instance Remes 2008b, 125; Remes 2008a, 155n4 (on p. 168 she points out that there is some interest in Plotinus in individuality).

38 Schroeder 1986b, 354.

39 Emilsson 2017, 285.

40 Cf. Sorabji 2000, 295–298; Sorabji 2006, 118–126.

41 Cf. Schibli 1989, 215.

42 Cf. Emilsson 1988, 27–28.

43 Cf. Richter 1897, 77; Schibli 1989, 215, note 29. Horn 2003, 65; Halfwassen 2010, 66.

44 O'Daly 1973, 20–21: "historical self" or "embodied self" (O'Daly assumes that there is a development in Plotinus' thought and that he showed more interest in the historical self in the middle and later texts; cf. O'Daly 1973, 20–21, 27, 30, 46, 48. O'Daly 1973, 21). Cf. also Rist 1967b, 153–168; Rist 1973; Smith 1978, 292; Armstrong 1979a; Armstrong 1979b; Schibli 1989, 213; Rist 1967a, 417–418; Gerson 1992, 254–257; Gerson 1994, 127–

historical self seems to be what we are in this life in the sensible realm, whereas the true self is what we could or should become again when we return to the intelligible realm. We get to decide on which level "we" live; we can identify with the human being or try to go back to the higher self.[45] And this higher self seems to be above rational thought.[46] The lower self may seem "highly 'personal' to modern ways of thinking," but it is not the true self.[47] We move from an *I* or "personal *ego*" to a "*we* knowing."[48] The goal is to transcend the empirical self and to become one with the One.[49] The "ideal self" is said to be "eternally real" und "the same in kind for everyone."[50] This raises the question whether the "lower, bodily self"—as some authors call it—becomes a different self when it

151; Sorabji 2000, 294; Gurtler 2005, 124; D'Ancona 2006, 23–26; Stern-Gillet 2006, 158–159; Stern-Gillet 2008, 331–332; Remes 2007, pass., for instance 6, 10; Remes 2008b, 206; Gurtler 2008, 117–118; 126; Stamatellos 2013, 55–56; Aubry 2014, 312; Kalligas 2014, 261; Caluori 2015, 162–163, 174; Emilsson and Strange 2015, 197; Gurtler 2015, 203–204; Emilsson 2017, 286, 293; Stang 2019, 149–155. Caluori 2015, 162 writes that "the referent's of the 'we' are fixed" as the higher pure soul and the lower soul that cares for the body; Caluori's focus is, however, not this we, nor the ego, nor subjectivity, but the objective description of the soul (ibid. 162–163). Cf. also Gurtler 1988, 180: "What 'we' are extends, therefore, in both directions, outward into the world, which we unify in sense-experience, and inward toward the intellectual, which constitutes our identity in a much truer way." Gurtler often speaks about the "true" self in his book. Cf. Gurtler 2022, 119–131.

45 Cf. Tornau 2010; Tornau 2009, 334; Szlezák 2000, 178.

46 Cf. Hadot 1997, 31.

47 Cf. Armstrong 1979a, 61. It has been suggested to restrict the term "self" for the "primary, pure, rational self" (Remes 2007, 30) and to define the lower self as "person," even though this terminology is not without difficulty (Remes 2007, 10). Cf. Banner 2017, 141 who speaks of the "self or pseudo-self" and Berchman 2021, 193 who writes that Plotinus "reject(s) *egoistic* concepts of self-reference" and that the "subject is not merely a person, or an individual *ego*."

48 Berchman 2021, 236: "The 'fact' of *my* intellect, *my* consciousness, or *my* self-consciousness is not simply a subjective mental state, *my* brain activity, or *my* response to external empirical events suggestive of a subjective reception of brute facts *tout court*—but something rather different. There is no longer only a personal *ego* thinking only internal mental states; but there is an interpersonal *nous* thinking other minds—which amounts to the disappearance of a *me* and the acquisition of a *we* knowing. *Ego* (I) concepts of self-reference are abandoned and the subject becomes a *nous* (We) self where the potential to think is brought to activity by receiving forms and concepts." Cf. Berchman 2021, 189: "The problem of self-knowledge and self-identity focuses on how unified the self really is. Am *I* a singular self, a *We* self, how are they related to each other and when do *I* become a *We* self-reflexive self?"

49 Cf. Armstrong 1979a, 65.

50 Cf. Gerson 1994, 141. Cf. Berchman 2021, 193: "The subject is also a general or universal self."

identifies itself with the higher self.[51] Is the ascent to the true self an annihilation of the historical self? Interpretations vary. Some think that the ascent does not annihilate the lower "we," the consciousness of the human being, but that the person somehow remains.[52] The ascent to intellect does not make us "lose self-identity but heighten(s) it."[53] Other readers assert that Plotinus' main view is that the "embodied part is not a crucial part of the self, or, on a more radical reading, a part of it at all."[54]

Despite these differing formulations and interpretations, most of these authors distinguish between an empirical and a true self.[55] Some authors however distinguish three forms of self: a "noetic," a "dianoetic," and a "physical self,"[56] thus giving a specific place for rational thought between intellection and the corporeal life.[57] An ascent or a transformation to the higher self is possible.[58] We can place the center of our personality at a higher or lower level[59] and aim for a "newly integrated personality."[60] This aims at a permanent self-formation which attempts to locate the center of the personality in one specific area.

---

51 Cf. Gerson 1994, 143–144.

52 Cf. Tornau 2010; Tornau 2009, 355. Cf. also (though not with reference to "self") Karfík 2014, 111–112.

53 Berchman 2021, 239: "by raising ourselves to *Nous* we in no sense lose self-identity but heighten it."

54 Remes 2007, 121. Cf. Remes 2007, 186; Remes 2007, 254–257. Remes does not treat passages in which Plotinus presents a larger notion of the self.

55 Some authors rather speak about a self operating on two levels. Cf. Gurtler 2005, 125: "His language moves from taking one self as functioning on diverse levels to taking different selves as if in conflict with one another. This second kind of language should not be taken too strictly, but expresses Plotinus' hortatory purpose of encouraging the soul to go beyond the virtues to become divine." Long 2015, 16: "What Plotinus calls the 'we' (or the human self) straddles two levels, making us, as he says, 'amphibious' or double."

56 Hutchinson 2018, pass., clearly stated for instance on p. 9. Cf. Hutchinson 2011, 264 and pass.; Ham 2000, 116–117: 1) "le 'moi' comme principe de localisation, de decision;" 2) "le 'moi veritable';" 3) "le 'moi' inférieur;" 4) "le 'moi' discursif." Stang 2016, 199–200 writes that the "doubled selfhood" is turned into a "tripled selfhood" to "hold together the sensible and intelligible worlds," and that this "mediating self" is the "we" which is equated with "discursive reasoning," but that "the threefold model of selfhood again resolves into the twofold model." Sorabji 2000, 294 speaks of "two or three selves."

57 Cf. for different tripartition Berchman 2021, 189: "If Plotinus distinguishes three levels of mental activity and maps three levels of self-identity: the soul-trace (bodily sense and sensibility), the lower soul (perception and apprehension), and the higher soul (thinking and intellection)." Cf. also Emilsson 2017, 286–287.

58 Banner 2017 speaks of the "transformational character."

59 Szlezák 2000, 178.

60 Rist 1967a, 417.

Plotinus makes a point about "self-identification."[61] There is, one might say, a principle which decides on which level one wants to live.[62] This is an ethical decision, a decision about one's way of life.[63]

The second approach almost gives up the idea of a unified self. Dodds speaks of the "ego" as the "fluctuating spotlight of consciousness."[64] This "floating ego"[65] is the point of consciousness, which changes and can direct itself to different levels, faculties, activities, of thought, perception and the body.[66] Sorabji modifies Dodds' definition by saying that "the self seems to be what is spotlit, rather than the spotlight."[67] Or is it reasonable to understand the self not "as a subject, but a unity beyond the distinction between subject and object"?[68] This is a dynamic which is momentary and can change due to our focus or to external factors.[69] Thus, the most radical view even rejects terms like substance and identity.[70] Kalligas, however, tries do combine the two main interpretational attempts by distinguishing the "proper 'self'" from "'us'"—Dodds' "fluctuating spotlight."[71]

---

61 Remes 2008b, 124. Cf. 133. Cf. also Remes 2022, 247.

62 Ham 2000, 116–117. Cf. Trouillard 2011, 26.

63 Ham 2000, 119. Cf. also Stern-Gillet 2008, 333; Aubry 2014, 318–319.

64 Dodds in the discussion of Schwyzer 1960, 385–386: "Soul is a continuum extending from the summit of the individual ψυχή, whose activity is perpetual intellection, through the normal empirical self right down to the εἴδωλον, the faint psychic trace in the organism; but the ego is a fluctuating spotlight of consciousness." Cf. also Dodds 1960, 5.

65 Smith 1978, 293.

66 Cf. Dodds 1965, 77, note 3; Warren 1964, 92. The "we" is "a focus of conscious activity" (Blumenthal 1971a, 110; O'Daly 2017, 183) or "a mobile focus of the personality" (Blumenthal 1978, 407); the "self" has "multiple layers of consciousness" (Narbonne 2011, 62).

67 Sorabji 2000, 294–295; Sorabji 2006, 119.

68 Gurtler 2005, 122: "The self is thus not defined by its content, its activities, or its own consciousness, but by its relationships. The modern emphasis on defining the self in terms of the contents of thought, consciousness, understanding, and memory or of assuming the subjective starting point is completely foreign to Plotinus' point of view. The self is not a subject, but a unity beyond the distinction between subject and object."

69 Cf. Trouillard 2011, 27; Narbonne 2012, XCIV, no. 18, cf. LXXXII, no. 103; Pradeau 2010, 220, note 63.

70 Aubry speaks of "sujet-conscience;" the "sujet plotinien" does not have consciousness, but turns into that of which it is conscious (Aubry 2008, pass., especially 109, 111, 120). The *hêmeis* would be "pure situation" (Aubry 2004, 256); it "cannot be substantified" (Aubry 2014, 310). For a critical assessment of this interpretation cf. Chiaradonna 2008, 283. Cf. Aubry's response to critical remarks (Aubry 2020, 217–218 and note 23).

71 Kalligas 2000, 29–30. Cf. 37: "The sage realizes that his and every other person's real self never descends to this world, nor can it ever suffer any misfortune. It is only our conscious 'we' which undergoes all the sufferings and the adventurous engagements with the body and its passions."

The variety of interpretations shows that there is no unanimity regarding Plotinus' theory of the *hêmeis*. Does he even use it as a "technical term"?[72] Some authors wonder whether Plotinus truly tried to define the self when he used terms like *hêmeis* or *autos*; they write that his language might just have been "inconsistent," that the term *hêmeis* may not have more than "the usual meaning."[73] However, it is by no means clear how to distinguish between the "usual meaning" and a more technical usage if one passage is defined as technical by one interpreter, but rejected as "usual meaning" by others. In these cases, a definition or at least a presupposition of what the *hêmeis* is as a technical term determines whether passages are included or excluded. Furthermore, Plotinus' reflections of the *hêmeis* very often start from the everyday usage of this term, then exceed this usage and finally analyze or reflect on the usage. The tension between the everyday usage of these terms and Platonic assumptions about what "we" truly are is at the center of Plotinus' reflections on this topic.

3 Methodology

The answer to the question of the existence of a "theory of the self" strongly depends on our assessment of the systematic or un-systematic character of Plotinus' work. His texts often stray from their stated topic and interweave important issues. Statements on specific issues are spread out over the whole corpus. Plotinus' thought is dialogic and often also deeply aporetic.

Consequently, not all authors agree on the systematicity of Plotinus' works. Some regard Plotinus as a philosopher who was sure he "knew the right answers."[74] His philosophical system is not explicitly developed in the treatises, but it is there, as their basis, behind the words.[75] Certain elements might have been so evident to Plotinus and his school that they did not have to be explained.[76] The main difficulty for the systematic view are the apparent or real contradictions.[77] Plotinus distinguishes, for instance, at times clearly between

72 Gurtler 1988, 190 writes that the term "we" "becomes almost a technical term in the *Enneads*." Cf. Kalligas 2014, 119: "a technical term designating the 'I' or subject of consciousness."

73 Blumenthal 1978, 408.

74 Armstrong 1967, 211: Plotinus was a "systematic and dogmatic philosopher who had no doubt that he knew the right answers to the great philosophical questions which he treated."

75 Cf. Schwyzer 1951, 548.

76 Cf. Horn 1995, 8–9.

77 Blumenthal 1971a, 1: "At first sight Plotinus' philosophy is full of contradictions."

the world-soul and soul itself, but he does not always make use of this distinction. One solution to this problem is to say that Plotinus had a coherent theory,[78] but that we can find "inconsistencies"[79] in this text which then have to be explained as carelessness,[80] philosophical development[81] or change of emphasis.[82] If one assumes that Plotinus did not present his system clearly in his texts, the task of the interpreter is to reconstruct this system, to describe what Plotinus *really* thought and meant to say, and what he did not express clearly and correctly due to the form of his writings.

One dissenting theory states that Plotinus did not regard philosophy as a system, but as spiritual exercise, a *psychagogia*.[83] The goal of a treatise would not be to present bits and pieces of a system, but to lead the soul of the reader upwards to the purification of the soul and to the union with the One.[84] Philosophy is a dynamic practice, a philosophical way of life.[85] Rational thought is said to be a part of the spiritual exercise leading the soul up to the union with the One.[86]

A third theory is that teaching was the main goal of the treatises. They are not mainly meant to be mystical or religious, but as a dialectic and argumentative training for the students and thus closely linked to the work in the school.[87]

Let us come to some conclusions. Plotinus' teaching was certainly marked by lively discussions and not the lecture of a school-master or the sermon of a prophet.[88] A proof for the idea that Plotinus was more interested in lively discourse than in the exposition of a doctrine can be found in Porphyry's report that Plotinus once kept answering Porphyry's questions even though a man

78 Blumenthal 1971b, 58.

79 Cf. Blumenthal 1971b, 55–56, 58, 60, 63; Blumenthal 1971a, 27, 61–62.

80 One attempt to explain such inconsistencies is to attribute them to the fact that Plotinus did not read his texts again after having written them. Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 8. Cf. Schwyzer 1951, 528.

81 It is certainly rarely possible to explain inconsistencies as different levels of development from earlier to later treatises, since similar statements can usually be found in later and earlier texts; there does not seem to be a radical development, since Plotinus only started writing late in his life. Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 4. Cf. Schwyzer 1951, 548; Blumenthal 1971a, 4. Cf. O'Daly 1973, 20 who assumes that there are shifts, but no radical change.

82 Cf. Igal 1979, 344.

83 Hadot 2002, 45.

84 Hadot 2002, 58; Cf. 57–60.

85 Beierwaltes 2011, 52–53; Beierwaltes 2006, 81; Beierwaltes 2001, 10–11; Hoffmann 1997, 337.

86 Cf. O'Meara 1993, 106–108; Kobusch 2002, 193; Hoffmann 1997, 362–363.

87 Horn 1995, 7–8 and note 1.

88 Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 3, 35–38.

called Thaumasius wanted him to give a lecture.[89] Plotinus' treatises have distinctly different modes of presentation and inquiry. Some are rhetorical and anagogical treatises like I 6 [1], in which Plotinus presents a description, full of images, of a path and an ascent and encourages the reader to purify the soul and approach the ascent.[90] Such texts and passages might be the origin of the image of Plotinus as a prophetic mystic.[91] However, many other treatises show a discursive form. Plotinus presents himself as a philosopher, interested in philosophical discourse and in dialogue. Sometimes the structure of the treatise is clearly directed to a goal such as in I 1 [53], sometimes detours and side-paths abound, such as in IV 3–5 [27–29].

In either case, if the goal is teaching or the ascent, it is not always clear whether we have, in every single passage, Plotinus' own theory in front of our eyes.[92] There are, in Plotinus as in Plato, many passages in which we cannot be sure whether the author wants to support this view or whether he presents it as someone else's view or just as a step in the development of thought. In a rhetorical treatise, every single statement is supposed to direct the reader (and not necessarily to make a philosophical argument). In a dialectical treatise, statements might be made simply to train the reader.[93] Clearly the variety of kinds of statement preclude an interpreter from combining them to reconstruct Plotinus' under- or un-stated meaning. If they are a rhetorical stratagem or a step in a train of thought to guide the philosophical novice, they have to be interpreted in this context and not taken as absolute answers.

Furthermore, the aporetic tendencies must be acknowledged. At the beginning of IV 3 [27],[94] Plotinus distinguishes two cases of *aporiai*: we either find a way out of the impasse toward knowledge or not. In the second case, it already constitutes an advancement in knowledge truly to understand the *aporia*. The long treatise which starts with this statement provides plenty of evidence for this hypothesis. Plotinus answers many questions about the soul, but many others remain unanswered. It seems, at times, more important to turn the problem over and view it from all sides and present it as truly aporetic to the reader, than to find a solution. We know this characteristic moment of philosophical thought from Plato's aporetic dialogues; they do not provide us with a clear and

89 Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 13.

90 Cf. Stock 2013.

91 Schwyzer 1960, 347. He also writes that Plotinus' writings have "something persuasive, almost incantatory" (my translation).

92 Contra Schwyzer 1960, 347.

93 On a similar interpretation of mistakes in Plato's dialogues cf. Horn 2010, 148.

94 IV 3 [27] 1, 1–4.

simple answer, but at least some of the interlocutors and/or readers gain some advancement in knowledge, even though it is not always easy to put into words what one has learned from the refutations of baseless opinions.

Under such constraints and with these interests of the author, the hope to discover a systematic unity necessarily recedes. In my view the aporetic character of the works and the importance of teaching show that the main goal of Plotinian texts is not to construct a system. However, I do not want to neglect systematic aspects in Plotinus. He wrote in the context of his school; his students knew more about his thought through his teaching. We might better understand some of his texts as supplemental to and prompts to oral discourse. In my view, then, the argumentative and discursive characteristic of the treatises makes it necessary to look at the specific train of thought and context first, and only then to consider how these might point to an underexpressed whole.

4 Plan

Clearly, no single theory of the coherence of what Plotinus says about the *hêmeis* or the self has won consensus. One either has to distinguish between different forms of the self or declare certain passages irrelevant. But no criterion can establish a distinction between the technical and the usual meaning of his terms, since Plotinus' thoughts start from the usual meaning. Further, his aporetic mode of thinking, and not some alleged failure of terminology, impels us to doubt that Plotinus actually had a clear, single theory. In my view, it is therefore necessary to consider the various passages without the presupposition of a theory. The passages have to be analyzed, in their context. Secondly, their implications for a systematic issue need to be considered. It is especially important not to discard passages as "usual meaning" too quickly, which means that the investigation will take into account passages which have usually been disregarded in the discussion.

Furthermore, I will refrain from using contemporary terms in my analysis. An empirical survey of contemporary scholars shows a strong tendency to use terms life the "self" regarding Plotinus and other ancient philosophers.[95] It cer-

95 Cf. Steel 1978 (on Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscian); Cary 2000 (on Augustine); Reydams-Schils 2005; Inwood 2005 (chap. 12 on Seneca); Gill 2006 (on Hellenistic and Roman philosophy); Sorabji 2006 (Part III "Platonism: impersonal selves, bundles, and differentiation" on Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus [118–126], Alexander, Augustine); Sorabji 2008; Remes and Sihvola 2008; Bartsch and Wray 2009; Reydams-Schils 2011, 297 (with a focus on "agency," i.e. the question not "what self *is*, but what it *does*"). Cf. Reydams-Schils 2011, 297–298, note 5 with further references; Barney and Brennan and Brittain 2012.

tainly is a "common practice."[96] But there is also criticism of such a usage. One should not, some say, take innocent words that play their role in everyday language out of their context.[97] However, the procedure to take words out of their context and reflect on their meaning is traditionally philosophical. A word that seems to be inconspicuous is drawn under the microscope. Aristotle, for instance, asks what we mean when we talk of "being" and "what is" and develops his ontology from the discussion of these words. Plotinus does something very similar with the notion *hêmeis*.[98] It is, of course, a reasonable warning not to be too eager to translate such words as "the I" or "the self."[99] But is does not seem reasonable to forego the usage of these terms completely. Rather it makes sense first to translate and analyze the text without reference to the contemporary terms and then to reflect on the application of the modern terms.[100] Undoubtedly, after Descartes[101] and Freud the "I" is not the same. However, the friction of ancient and modern terminology can help us gain new insights. So let us begin with the terms Plotinus actually used and not import an anachronistic terminology. Still, let us recognize the productivity of his thought, the ways it intervenes in the philosophical tradition and leads to new ideas.

Those scholars who have seen significance in Plotinus' choice of the term "we" have argued that the use of the first person flags an inner perspective and that the first person plural reveals his interest in what is common to all souls, not the individual.[102] This presentation sounds as if Plotinus had a con-

96 Stang 2016, 10.

97 Beckermann 2010, 459. He thinks (471) that one should give the words "I" and "myself" their role in normal language and not turn them into philosophical notions like "the I" and "the self," since this would only create false problems.

98 On the substantivation as a central moment of philosophical language, especially in Plotinus cf. Schwyzer 1951, 516.

99 Cf. Beckermann 2010, 462.

100 Sweeney 1992, 408–409: "First, when reading his Greek do not translate *autos* or *hauton* or *hêmeis* or *ekeino* as *self* but in some such fashion as 'what someone really is,' 'what we really are,' 'what man is essentially' and so on [...]. Second, try to understand Plotinus on his own (what *he* had in mind when writing such and such passage). Third, reflect anew to see if the application to Plotinus of some or other modern notion of 'self' may be helpful. [...] we do take into account 'self', ego, person with respect to Plotinus. But his own texts control the contemporary notions rather than the other way round."

101 Cf. Gurtler 1997; Gurtler 2005; Gurtler 2010; Stern-Gillet 2017; Aubry 2020; Berchman 2021, 161–164; 199–200 and pass. Rappe 1996, however, underlines a connection to Descartes.

102 Tornau 2010; Tornau 2009, 334; Chiaradonna 2008, 284; Laurent 1999a, 87; Remes 2007, 5; Stang 2016, 199–200. Cf. also Gurtler 2010, 82 who writes about Remes' book: "The second [i.e. *hêmeis*] indicates that he oddly talks of the self in the plural, the 'we' in the title, and not the solitary 'I' in which the modern self appears. What is missing in her analysis is the ability to imagine what it would be like to examine the self from a plural perspective and how, in fact, it might make Plotinus' position more comprehensible."

cept of the self in his mind, had gone through a number of Greek words and then decided to use *hêmeis*. But that is a misleading picture. Plotinus' thoughts are developed in and through language, and in this case it is everyday language that gets him to think and to coin a philosophical term. Everyday language turns out to be an essential starting point, but it is more than a starting point, it even contains important information which philosophical reflection has to take into account to truly understand the issue. Plotinus thus reflects on the word "we" as we use it when we speak about ourselves, and he perceives a tension with the Platonic idea of what we *truly* are. A common solution to this tension would be to discard the everyday usage as imprecise basic language and to develop a more precise philosophical terminology. Plotinus, however, decides to take our everyday way of speaking about "us" seriously, and he draws the term "we" into the limelight. He thus does something similar to do what Aristotle did when he wondered what it means to *be*.

As Plotinus constantly refers to Plato's theory, explicitly and implicitly, we have to take a look at the main features of Plato's thoughts on the soul and *hêmeis*. Even though Plotinus usually affirms that he is a faithful follower of Plato, his thought diverges from Plato's in significant ways and the considerations about the *hêmeis* are one case in which Plotinus develops ideas that clearly depart from Platonic precedents (chapter I). The following chapters (II–VII) will discuss six aspects of the usage of the term *hêmeis*. The last chapter (VIII) will take a look at treatise I 1 [53], Plotinus' masterpiece on the "we" which connects the various usages discussed before.

CHAPTER 1

Plotinus on the "We"—with, against and beyond Plato

The common Platonic answer to the question of what "we" are is: the soul, or rather: the rational soul or intellect.[1] Everything else, that is the lower functions of the soul or the body, do not really belong to "us" and should be treated as such. The thesis that the true human being is the rational soul appears in a variety of Platonic dialogues. In the *Phaedo*, this identification is obvious, both in the general opposition of body and (rational) soul and in a passage which follows his long talk with his friends about the immortality of the soul and the fate of the soul after death: Crito asks Socrates how they should bury him. "'However you wish,' he said. 'That is if you can catch me and I don't escape your clutches.'"[2] His friends can bury his body, but what he truly is, his soul, will have escaped to the intelligible realm. In a bit of a reversal of Homeric language[3] the true being of a human being is defined as the soul, and not the body. Thus all effort should be directed to it, to free it as much as possible from desires and everything that is linked to the body. Other dialogues like the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus* conceive of the soul as tripartite and thus acknowledge a variety of faculties and tendencies, but they nonetheless underscore the importance of the rational part which has to rule over the two other parts. In the *Republic*, Plato for instance draws the image of the soul in which a human being (often called the "inner man") stands for the rational soul and a lion and a polycephalic animal for the lower irrational parts.[4] In the *Phaedrus* the charioteer and the two horses stand for these parts of the soul.[5] The *Timaeus* assumes that the lower parts of the soul were created by lesser gods and are mortal, whereas the highest part of the soul, situated in the head, is divine, a *daimôn*, given to us by god.[6] The memorable bestial metaphors and the idea of the intellect as the *daimôn* imply a composite entity which sets the rational soul above but in active association with irrational tendencies. But they

1 Cf. Sorabji 2000, 293: "that the true self is the intellect;" Sorabji 2006, 115–117.
2 Plato, *Phd*. 115c (Emlyn-Jones/Preddy).
3 Cf. Homer, *Il.* 1, 3–5. Cf. Schroeder 1986b, 349–350; Long 2015, 18.
4 Cf. Plato, *Rep*. 588c–e. On the tripartition of the soul in the *Republic* cf. Shields 2014.
5 Cf. Plato, *Phdr*. 246a–b.
6 Cf. Plato, *Tim*. 90a.

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_003

also underline the identification of the rational soul as what a human being truly is, since Plato makes it clear that the "inner human being"[7] (*Republic*), the charioteer (*Phaedrus*) and the intellect/*daimôn* (Timaeus) are what truly counts and what should rule. The most important source and opponent for Plotinus' ideas on what "we" are is, however, the *Alcibiades 1* (it was read as Platonic by Plotinus and later Neoplatonists, but there has been a debate about its authenticity).[8] This dialogue connects the topics of self-knowledge[9] and of the care of oneself: If we want to understand how to make "ourselves" better, we have to know "what we are ourselves (*autoi*)."[10] At some point, Socrates asks: "Then whatever is the human being?"[11] and offers three options: "Soul, body, or both together as one whole."[12] His arguments, involving thoughts about the user and the tool and about what rules and what is ruled, lead him to the conclusion:

> But since neither the body nor the combination of the two is the human being, we are reduced, I suppose, to this: either the human being is nothing at all, or if something, s/he turns out to be nothing else than soul.[13]

The answer to the questions "What are we ourselves?" and "What is the human being?" is the same: soul. The "human being" is soul, and "we ourselves" are soul, and to take care of oneself means to take care of the soul. The ethical element of the care of oneself is inextricably linked to the epistemological element, since one has to know oneself in order to take care of oneself.[14] The *Alcibiades 1* also raises the question of what the *auto to auto* is, i.e. not merely what "we our-

---

7 Cf. this image, which is present in the pagan and the Christian tradition, Markschies 1998 (on Plotinus 272–274). Cf. also Markschies 1994; Markschies 1995.

8 Cf. O'Daly 1973, 10–11; Blumenthal 1978, 408; Aubry 2004, 20–22. On its importance for Plotinus and Proclus cf. also van den Berg 2014, 274–276. On the *Alcibiades* with arguments for its authenticity cf. Annas 1985.

9 Cf. Lloyd 1964, 193 who writes that the Neoplatonic *Gnôthi seauton* "combined the existence of a real self" as inner god, *homoiôsis theô* and "knowledge as like known by like."

10 (Ps.-)Plato, *Alc.* 1 128e11 (Lamb): τί ποτ' ἐσμὲν αὐτοί.

11 (Ps.-)Plato, *Alc.* 1 129e9 (Lamb, slightly revised): Τί ποτ' οὖν ὁ ἄνθρωπος;

12 (Ps.-)Plato, *Alc.* 1 130a9 (Lamb): Ψυχὴν ἢ σῶμα ἢ συναμφότερον, τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο.

13 (Ps.-)Plato, *Alc.* 1 130c1–3 (Lamb, slightly revised): Ἐπειδὴ δ' οὔτε σῶμα οὔτε τὸ συναμφότερόν ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος, λείπεται οἶμαι ἢ μηδὲν αὖτ' εἶναι, ἢ εἴπερ τί ἐστι, μηδὲν ἄλλο τὸν ἄνθρωπον συμβαίνειν ἢ ψυχήν.

14 Cf. Remes 2022, 241.

selves" are, but the "itself itself,"[15] and later Neoplatonic philosophers take up this distinction in interesting ways,[16] but Plotinus does not seem interested in this particular issue.

Plato seems to have settled the answer to the questions "What are we?" and "What is the human being?": the soul or, to be precise, the rational soul. Plotinus takes up these questions and thoughts, but he does not simply identify "we" with soul much less with the rational part of the soul alone.[17] A close analysis of Plotinus' works reveals different ways in which he uses this term. Some of these ways are very common and appear in many treatises, others are rarer. Plotinus, however, hardly limits himself to just one meaning in one treatise, but usually moves freely from one to the other. The following chapters will discuss these usages, combining the treatises which give the most acute account of the usage in question—even if a particular treatise combines several usages.

The first usage is based on the most basic distinctions of "we." Plotinus often speaks of *hekastos hêmon*, i.e. of "each one of us" and then reflects on what this phrase refers to, whether it includes the whole human being or just refers to the soul. Unlike Plato, he does not try to limit the usage of "we" to what we "really" are, but takes up both aspects and freely moves from one meaning to the other. The other aspect at stake is the problem of individuality, i.e. the question of how "each one of us" can be an individual even though all souls are one. The second usage takes up ethical questions. The central idea Plotinus advances is that "we" are nothing unless we are the ethical subject, unless "we" take responsibility for our actions. The third usage reflects on the location of the "we" in regards to sense-perception, rational thought, intellect and the One. Rather than to ask "what we are," Plotinus asks "where" we are. This question leads him to distinguish between what "we" are and what is "ours," i.e. another distinction that comes into play in the *Alcibiades 1*. The fourth usage is a development of the third usage. Rather than speaking about what "we" are and what is "ours," Plotinus distinguishes between what we are aware of and what we are not aware of, i.e. between the center of consciousness and all of what belongs to us even though we are not aware of it. The fifth usage focuses on the treatises which suggest that the "we" is double, that there is a higher "we" in the intelligible realm and a lower "we" in this realm here. The higher "we" would be what "we" are while "we" are in the intelligible realm, whereas the lower "we" refers to the living being. There is, often, a strong notion of "ascent" and "descent." The

15 Cf. (Ps.-)Plato, *Alc.* I 129b1, 130d4. Cf. Denyer 2001, 211–212.

16 Cf. Olympiodorus, *In Alc. 123–151* Lectures 24–28. Cf. Opsomer 2010, 698note7; Griffin 2016, 30note99.

17 Cf. Sorabji 2000, 294.

last usage focuses on a very common usage in Plotinus, i.e. on "we" as referring to those who philosophize. In this sense, the "we" refers to souls and human beings at the same time, because those who philosophize are human beings and not discarnate souls, but they philosophize not because they have a body, but because they are soul. The last chapter presents Plotinus' penultimate treatise I 1 [53], which is singled out as the most elaborate and detailed answer to the question, combining all the relevant usages. It is Plotinus' masterpiece on what "we" are.

CHAPTER 2

Each Individual One of Us

1 Soul and Composite Being

Plotinus first addresses the question of what "we" are in his second treatise, which discusses the immortality of the soul (IV 7 [2]).[1] The first question of this treatise does not inquire about the immortality of the *soul* or of human beings, but of *hekastos hêmôn*, of "each individual one of us."

> Whether each individual one of us is immortal, or whether we are destroyed entirely, or whether part of the individual departs to dispersion and destruction and some abides for ever, the part which is it itself, this question one might discover as follows, by an investigation according to the nature of the subject.[2]

Plotinus does not specify what this "us" is, but the pedagogical context of the treatise suggests that it refers, at least at first, to the people present, i.e. Plotinus and his students. Plotinus starts the discussion by asking his disciples a question, and he includes them in a "we" and thereby encourages them to follow him in his thoughts.[3] As soon as the treatise is written it includes every reader, and finally every human being. If this is correct "we" refers to beings composed of body and soul. This implicit definition[4] obviously requires an explanation:

> Human beings cannot be a simple thing, but there is in them a soul, and they have a body as well, whether it is our tool or attached to us in some other way.[5]

1 Cf. Fleet 2016.

2 IV 7 [2] 1, 1–4 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Εἰ δέ ἐστιν ἀθάνατος ἕκαστος ἡμῶν, ἢ φθείρεται πᾶς, ἢ τὰ μὲν αὐτοῦ ἄπεισιν εἰς σκέδασιν καὶ φθοράν, τὰ δὲ μένει εἰς ἀεί, ἅπερ ἐστὶν αὐτός, ὧδ' ἄν τις μάθοι κατὰ φύσιν ἐπισκοπούμενος.

3 On this usage cf. below chapter VII (117–124).

4 Cf. Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, Ib, 387: "ἡμῶν: terminologisch 'der Mensch' (Zeile 5 aufgenommen mit ἄνθρωπος), Gegensatz das Tier oder der Kosmos. Offenbar Schulsprache; bei Plotin stehender, reich differenzierter Sprachgebrauch."

5 IV 7 [2] 1, 5–7 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ἁπλοῦν μὲν δή τι οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ ψυχή, ἔχει δὲ καὶ σῶμα εἴτ' οὖν ὄργανον ὂν ἡμῖν, εἴτ' οὖν ἕτερον τρόπον προσηρτημένον.

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_004

Plotinus' choice of words is revealing: Soul is said to *be in* human beings while they *have* a body. The two components of a human being, body and soul, are not equal parts. The idea of the body as a tool is not new,[6] and Plotinus uses it elsewhere.[7] And, if, usually, the user of the tool of the body is the soul,[8] then Plotinus suggests that "we" are the soul when he speaks about "our tool." Therefore, since the first sentence of IV 7 [2] suggested that "we" are the living human being, there is already an ambivalence of the term in the first couple of sentences: "we" can refer to human living beings and to soul alone.

If "we" refers to the human being, "we" are composite, and then "we" have to consider the two elements in order to determine whether this whole entity is immortal. One part, the body is, of course, mortal, since it dissolves into its parts after death.[9] "So, if this body is part of us, we are not immortal as a whole; if it is a tool, it must, since it was given us for a certain time, be temporal of nature."[10] As living human beings with body and soul, "we" are not immortal, because the body is part of "us," and this body is divisible and therefore mortal. If the body is merely "our" tool, "we" are just what is higher. Plotinus writes:

> The most important part and the human being itself, if it is this, is related to the body as form to matter or user to tool; in either way, the soul is [the human being] itself.[11]

Plotinus distinguishes between "human being" and "human being itself;" and the latter, *autos ho anthrôpos*, is the soul. Plotinus describes its relation to the body with two comparisons, the relation of user to tool he already mentioned earlier in the text and the relation of form to matter taken from Aristotle's *De anima*.[12] Plotinus does not discuss or criticizes these comparisons as he does elsewhere.[13] He is only interested in the conclusion: *hê psychê autos*. Some

---

6 Cf. Brisson and Pradeau 2002, 126, note 1. Cf. p. ex. (Ps.-)Plato, *Alc.* I 129c–130c. Aristotle, *EN* VIII.11 1161a35–36.

7 Cf. p. ex. IV 3 [27] 21, 12–20; I 1 [53] 3, 3–8.

8 IV 3 [27] 21, 12–20.

9 Cf. IV 7 [2] 1, 8–19.

10 IV 7 [2] 1, 20–22 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ὥστ' εἰ μὲν μέρος ἡμῶν τοῦτο, οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἀθάνατοι, εἰ δὲ ὄργανον, ἔδει γε αὐτὸ εἰς χρόνον τινὰ δοθὲν τοιοῦτον τὴν φύσιν εἶναι.

11 IV 7 [2] 1, 22–25 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Τὸ δὲ κυριώτατον καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, εἴπερ τοῦτο, κατὰ τὸ εἶδος ὡς πρὸς ὕλην τὸ σῶμα ἢ κατὰ τὸ χρώμενον ὡς πρὸς ὄργανον· ἑκατέρως δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτός.

12 Cf. p.ex. Aristotle, *De an.*, II, 1, 412a6–22. Cf. Brisson and Pradeau 2002, 127, note 7; Fleet 2016, 83–84. Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De an.* pass.

13 Cf. I 1 [53] 3–5.

scholars translate *autos* as "the self,"[14] but in my view, it makes more sense to translate *autos* as an abbreviated version of *autos ho anthrôpos* from the beginning of the same sentence. If this is correct, Plotinus does not say that the self is the soul or the soul the self, but that the soul is the most important part (*kyriôtaton*) and "human being itself" (*autos ho anthrôpos*). This recalls the Platonic image of the rational soul as "inner human being."[15]

In what follows, Plotinus discusses the right definition of the soul. He rejects Atomistic, Stoic and Aristotelian theories and mostly uses the terms body and soul, not "we" or "us," but these terms come up in couple of significant moments. In his discussion of Stoic theories in chapter 5, Plotinus writes that it seems to be impossible to explain growing if the soul is corporeal.[16] Then he says:

> But if, just like the rest of our [bodily] mass, some of its substance will flow away, and some of it will come from outside, and nothing will be the same, how then do we have memories, and how do friends and relations recognize each other when they never have the same souls?[17]

If there were a constant addition and retraction as in the case of the body, the soul would not remain the same. Memories would be impossible as there would be a constant change.[18] Again, there is a certain ambiguity about the definition of the term. "We," "us" and "ours" can refer to either human beings as composite beings of body and soul or just to the soul; it is clearly not a static, but a

14 Armstrong translates these words as "the soul is the self;" Fleet translates "the soul is the true self." Harder translates: "[…] ist dies Selbst die Seele." Gerson translates "the soul is the self" (Gerson 1994, 269, note 24. Cf. Gerson 2021, 180). Armstrong had already translated *haper estin autos* in line 3 as "the part which is the self." Harder even translates *autos ho anthrôpos* in linen 22–23 as "das Selbst des Menschen." These translators interpret *autos* as a noun signifying "the self." Brisson and Pradeau translate the ending of chapter 1 as "l'âme est le soi," i.e. they introduce the article ("le") and they read as the footnote shows the reflexive pronoun *hautou* instead of *autos*. Cf. Brisson and Pradeau 2002, 127, note 7: "On rend ainsi par 'soi' *hautós* qui est employé par Plotin de façon substantivée, comme l'avait fait Platon dans l'*Alcibiade* alors qu'il se demandait ce qu'était au just le 'soi-même' lorsqu'on cherchait à obéir à l'injonction delphique à se 'connaître soi-même'. Le soi en l'homme, c'est l'âme." Cf. Fleet 2016, 76–78.

15 Cf. Plato, *Rep*. 588b–e.

16 Cf. IV 7 [2] 5, 7–20.

17 IV 7 [2] 5, 20–24 (Armstrong): Εἰ δὲ καί, ὥσπερ ὁ ἄλλος ὄγκος ἡμῶν, τὸ μέν τι ἀπορρεύσεται αὐτοῦ, τὸ δέ τι προσελεύσεται, οὐδὲν δὲ ἔσται τὸ αὐτό, πῶς οὖν ἡμῖν αἱ μνῆμαι, πῶς δὲ ἡ γνώρισις οἰκείων οὐδέποτε τῇ αὐτῇ ψυχῇ χρωμένων;

18 Memories are ascribed to the soul in IV 3 [27] 26–IV 4 [28] 9.

dynamic concept. Plotinus reflects on what belongs to "us," as human beings or souls, and wants to find out in what way these different elements belong to "us" or are part of "us." The goal is the understanding of "us," i.e. of "us" as human beings or of "our soul." "Our soul," i.e. this human soul[19] can be investigated either insofar as it is connected to the body or insofar as it has purified itself, and here, in IV 7 [2], Plotinus wants to focus on the latter.[20] He is interested in the soul that purifies itself, known from the *Phaedo*, the soul that tries to distance itself from the body during life in order to be able to enter the intelligible realm at death.

The analysis of this early treatise shows that Plotinus follows our common usage of the term "we" in referring either to "us" as the whole living being or to the soul alone. Plotinus is aware of the ambiguity of expressions like "each one of us" and thus makes a point of the implications of the different interpretations of this term as either soul or living being. However, he never tries to resolve this tension or ambiguity by distinguishing a correct philosophical usage from an everyday usage. This may seem a weakness to some, but it is, in my mind, the philosophical point Plotinus wants to make. Plotinus does not seem to think that we should focus solely on what "we" truly are. "We" is a dynamic notion, and it depends on how "we" see and identify ourselves. This is even the condition for ascent—if "we" do not understand where "we" stand at any given moment, and if "we" do not understand that "we" can shift the focus, the ascent is not possible.

Plotinus comes back to the problem of understanding the true nature of soul in treatise IV 2 [4], and he uses similar terms in speaking of "us" in this treatise. Plotinus says that soul has to be divisible and indivisible:

> But the nature at once divisible and indivisible which we affirm to be soul is not one in the way in which the continuous is, having different parts; but it is divisible in that it is in all the parts of that in which it is, but indivisible in that it is present in all the parts of it as a whole and in any one part as a whole.[21]

---

19 The notion "our soul" commonly refers to the human soul and is as such opposed to the world-soul or to soul itself. Cf. IV 7 [2] 10, 4–7.

20 Cf. IV 7 [2] 10, 7–11 (Armstrong): "Let us take soul, not the soul in body which has acquired irrational desires and passions and admitted other affection, but the soul which has wiped these away and which, as far as possible, has no communion with the body." Λάβωμεν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ τὴν ἐν σώματι ἐπιθυμίας ἀλόγους καὶ θυμοὺς προσλαβοῦσαν καὶ πάθη ἄλλα ἀναδεξαμένην, ἀλλὰ τὴν ταῦτα ἀποτριψαμένην καὶ καθόσον οἷόν τε μὴ κοινωνοῦσαν τῷ σώματι.

21 IV 2 [4] 1, 62–66 (Armstrong): Ἡ δ' ὁμοῦ μεριστή τε καὶ ἀμέριστος φύσις, ἣν δὴ ψυχὴν εἶναί φαμεν, οὐχ οὕτως ὡς τὸ συνεχὲς μία, μέρος ἄλλο, τὸ δ' ἄλλο ἔχουσα· ἀλλὰ μεριστὴ μέν, ὅτι ἐν πᾶσι μέρεσι τοῦ ἐν ᾧ ἔστιν, ἀμέριστος δέ, ὅτι ὅλη ἐν πᾶσι καὶ ἐν ὁτῳοῦν αὐτοῦ ὅλη.

Who understands this "will know what a divine and wonderful thing it is."[22] Bodies are being divided, not the soul itself; it is only "divided in the sphere of bodies" as they cannot receive it completely due to their own divisibility.[23] Plotinus gives additional reasons:

> For if it was like bodies, having parts different from each other, then when one part was affected the other would not arrive at any perception of the affected part, but it would be that particular soul, the one in the region of the finger, for instance, which would perceive the affection as a soul distinct from the other and on its own: so, speaking generally, there would be many souls directing each one of us, and furthermore it would not be one soul which would direct this universe, but innumerable souls separate from each other.[24]

Plotinus investigates the idea that many souls rule or direct "each one of us." If one accepted the idea of different souls in different parts of the body, there would be no inner continuity of perception as different souls would be in charge of different perceptions, for example pain in the toe and a pleasant feeling in the hand. It does not seem reasonable to assume such a variety and multiplicity of souls in one single human being, since there would be no inner unity which combines all the different perceptions and affections into one single being. Plotinus clearly wants to underline the unity of a single human being, which is not split up in different souls directing different parts, but must be one, including all these different elements and impulses, pains and pleasures which we find in us.

The two early treatises presented in this chapter show that the use of *hêmeis* is varied already at this time (later treatises will not simplify or systematize). *Hêmeis* can denote human beings as livings beings (i.e. as body and soul) or just the soul; this notion also often refers collectively to Plotinus himself and his disciples who philosophize with him. In each of the treatises Plotinus switches from one notion to the other, and back again. This variability is an important feature of the *hêmeis* as it suggests how variable "we" are when "we" live in this

22 IV 2 [4] 1, 68 (Armstrong): ὡς θεῖον τὸ χρῆμα αὐτῆς καὶ θαυμαστὸν.

23 IV 2 [4] 1, 73–76 (Armstrong). Cf. Stock 2020, 221.

24 IV 2 [4] 2, 4–11 (Armstrong): Εἴτε γὰρ οὕτως ἦν, ὡς τὰ σώματα, ἄλλο, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο ἔχουσα μέρος, οὐκ ἂν τοῦ ἑτέρου παθόντος τὸ ἕτερον μέρος εἰς αἴσθησιν ἦλθε τοῦ παθόντος, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη ἂν ἡ ψυχή, οἷον ἡ περὶ τὸν δάκτυλον, ὡς ἑτέρα καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς οὖσα ᾔσθετο τοῦ παθήματος· πολλαί γε ὅλως ἦσαν ψυχαὶ αἱ διοικοῦσαι ἕκαστον ἡμῶν· καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε οὐ μία, ἀλλὰ ἄπειροι χωρὶς ἀλλήλων.

world. When we use the notion "we" we may refer to a group "we" are part of or we can refer to "our" whole being including the body or just to "our" soul. This is not, as it might seem, an arbitrary or inconsistent usage, but it is an essential feature of the term "we" that its meaning shifts. These usages are, however, connected as all referring to an "I" or "we" who can speak in the first person plural.

2 Mine, Yours, Ours

Treatise IV 9 [8] is dedicated to the topic of the unity of all souls and discusses, among other topics, the question of the individuality or personality of an individual soul.

Plotinus starts with the unity of every human soul. In every human being there is one soul; soul is not split up into different parts which reside in different parts of the body, but one soul is in the whole of the body. The same is true for the souls in animals and plants.[25] If the soul of one single being is one, one has to ask:

> so in the same way my soul and your soul are one, and all the souls are one? And in the All is the soul of the All one, not as divided into parts by its mass, but one and the same thing everywhere? For why should my soul be one, but the soul in the universe not one? For it is no mass or body there either. Now if my soul and your soul come from the soul of the All, and that soul is one, these souls also must be one. But if the soul of the All and my soul come from one soul which is one, again all souls are one. Well, then, what is this soul which is one?[26]

In many other passages, Plotinus employs "our souls" to designate the human souls. Here, however, he speaks of "my soul" and "your" soul, i.e. explicitly of individual souls. And if the soul in one individual body is one, then all these individual souls have to be one as well, Plotinus thinks, as both the world-soul and the individual souls stem from one soul which is one, i.e. from soul itself.

However, it seems problematic to assume that "my" soul and "your" soul are one:

---

25 Cf. IV 9 [8] 1, 1–6.

26 IV 9 [8] 1, 6–13 (Armstrong, slightly revised): οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἐμὴ καὶ ἡ σὴ μία καὶ πᾶσαι μία; Καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ παντὸς ἡ ἐν πᾶσι μία οὐχ ὡς ὄγκῳ μεμερισμένη, ἀλλὰ πανταχοῦ ταὐτόν; Διὰ τί γὰρ ἡ ἐν ἐμοὶ μία, ἡ δ' ἐν τῷ παντὶ οὐ μία; Οὐ γὰρ ὄγκος οὐδὲ ἐκεῖ οὐδὲ σῶμα. Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς καὶ ἡ ἐμὴ καὶ ἡ σή, μία δὲ ἐκείνη, καὶ ταύτας δεῖ εἶναι μίαν. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἡ τοῦ παντὸς καὶ ἡ ἐμὴ ἐκ ψυχῆς μιᾶς, πάλιν αὖ πᾶσαι μία. Αὕτη τοίνυν τίς ἡ μία;

> For it would be absurd if my soul and anyone else's soul were one soul: for if I perceived anything another would have to perceive it too, and if I was good he would have to be good, and if I desired anything he would have to desire it, and in general we should have to have the same experiences as each other and as the All, so that if I had an experience the All would share in the perception of it.[27]

Plotinus refers to everyday experience: "I" differ from other people regarding perceptions, emotions, passions and character and virtue. In addition to these differences in individual perceptions Plotinus also refers to the question of the community in perception with the world-soul. He asks, on the one hand, whether the All has to perceive or feel what "I" perceive and, on the other hand, whether "we" have to have the same perceptions with each other and with the All. The theory of the unity of all souls seems to have the consequence that none of these distinctions between different souls would be possible, and that, of course, seems absurd. Plotinus furthermore underlines the fact that there are different kinds of souls in different beings, rational and irrational souls, souls in animals and plants, and this, too, seems to contradict the theory of the unity of the soul.[28]

Plotinus enumerates all these objections, but his goal is not to refute the theory of the unity of souls, but to find a viable answer to the objections. Otherwise "the All will not be one" and "we shall not discover one principle of souls."[29] Therefore he has to find a solution which solves the aforementioned problems.

> First of all, then, it is not true that, if my soul and someone else's are one soul, just for that reason my composite [of body and soul] is the same as his composite. For when something which is the same is both in one thing and in another it will not have the same experiences in each of them, as for instance the [form of] the human being in me when I am in motion: the form in me in motion and in you not in motion will be in motion in me and stationary in you.[30]

---

27 IV 9 [8] 1, 15–19 (Armstrong): Ἄτοπον γάρ, εἰ μία ἡ ἐμὴ καὶ ἡ ὁτουοῦν ἄλλου· ἐχρῆν γὰρ ἐμοῦ αἰσθανομένου καὶ ἄλλον αἰσθάνεσθαι, καὶ ἀγαθοῦ ὄντος ἀγαθὸν ἐκεῖνον εἶναι καὶ ἐπιθυμοῦντος ἐπιθυμεῖν, καὶ ὅλως ὁμοπαθεῖν ἡμᾶς τε πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ πρὸς τὸ πᾶν, ὥστε ἐμοῦ παθόντος συναισθάνεσθαι τὸ πᾶν.

28 Cf. IV 9 [8] 1, 20–21.

29 IV 9 [8] 1, 22–23 (Armstrong): τό τε πᾶν ἓν οὐκ ἔσται, μία τε ἀρχὴ ψυχῶν οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται.

30 IV 9 [8] 2, 1–6 (Armstrong): Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν οὐκ, εἰ ἡ ψυχὴ μία ἡ ἐμὴ καὶ ἡ ἄλλου, ἤδη καὶ τὸ συναμφότερον τῷ συναμφοτέρῳ ταὐτόν. Ἐν ἄλλῳ γὰρ καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ ταὐτὸν ὂν οὐ τὰ αὐτὰ πάθη ἕξει ἐν ἑκατέρῳ, ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ κινουμένῳ· ἐν ἐμοὶ γὰρ κινουμένῳ καὶ ἐν σοὶ μὴ κινουμένῳ ἐν ἐμοὶ μὲν κινούμενος, ἐν σοὶ δὲ ἑστὼς ἔσται·

Plotinus' argument uses embodiment to explain the lack of a community of perception of all souls. Bodies are the reason for differences and distance. The phrasing is a little odd, but the argument is clear. The human being "in me" and "in you" will be in motion or in rest, and this human being "in me" or "in you" is the soul which is in both, but in a different state as the whole being is in a different state. Therefore, there is "nothing really disconcerting about the same thing being in me and in you."[31] Furthermore, Plotinus says that one hand does not have a perception of what happens to the other hand, only the soul of the whole body perceives this.[32] And a being does not always know everything that happens in its body, especially in larger bodies:[33]

> so that it is not necessary, when one part is affected, for a clearly impressed perception to reach the total whole. But it is not absurd, and we do not have to abandon the idea, that the whole is jointly affected, but there is no need for there to be a perceptible impression.[34]

Not every perception in any part of the body will be conscious and present to the inner perception. A little later, Plotinus comes back to it:

> But just as in me the experience of a part need not dominate the whole, but what happens to what is more essential has an influence on the part, in the same way the influences which come from the All to the individual are more obvious, and we are often affected in the same way as the whole, but it is not clear whether what comes from us contributes anything to the whole.[35]

The perceptions in different parts of the body do not have to become conscious—or they do not have to come to the *hêmeis* as Plotinus also puts it. The opposite connection works better, he says, i.e. the link from the central consciousness to the limbs. It is not entirely clear what he is referring to. He

---

31 IV 9 [8] 2, 6–7 (Armstrong): καὶ οὐκ ἄτοπον οὐδὲ παραδοξότερον τὸ ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ ταὐτὸν εἶναι·

32 Cf. IV 9 [8] 2, 7–8.

33 Cf. IV 9 [8] 2, 12–18.

34 IV 9 [8] 2, 18–21 (Armstrong): ὥστε οὐκ ἀνάγκη διάδηλον τύπῳ τὴν αἴσθησιν τῷ ὅλῳ καὶ παντὶ εἰσαφικνεῖσθαι ἑνός τινος παθόντος. Ἀλλὰ συμπάσχειν μὲν οὐκ ἄτοπον οὐδὲ ἀπογνωστέον, τύπωσιν δὲ αἰσθητικὴν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον γίγνεσθαι.

35 IV 9 [8] 2, 28–33 (Armstrong): Ὥσπερ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ γενόμενον περὶ τὸ μέρος πάθος οὐκ ἀνάγκη κρατεῖν τοῦ ὅλου, ὃ δ' ἂν περὶ τὸ κυριώτερον γένηται φέρει τι εἰς τὸ μέρος, οὕτω τὰ μὲν ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς εἰς ἕκαστον σαφέστερα μᾶλλον ὁμοπαθούντων πολλαχοῦ τῷ ὅλῳ, τὰ δὲ παρ' ἡμῶν ἄδηλον εἰ συντελεῖ πρὸς τὸ ὅλον.

might be thinking of movements I want my limbs to perform. He cannot be referring to passions and emotions, as I cannot order my hand to feel pain. Something similar is true in the All, says Plotinus. The effect of the higher on "us" is obvious—Plotinus probably thinks of effect of the stars on human life. An effect in the opposite direction is on the other hand negligible.

After having discussed the connection between "us" and the All, Plotinus comes back to the problem of the community of experiences between human beings:

> Indeed, the arguments deriving from facts opposed [to the assumption of complete separation of souls] assert that we do share each other's experiences when we suffer with others from seeing their pain and feel happy and relaxed [in their company] and are naturally drawn to love them.[36]

Plotinus interprets compassion and love as signs of the communion of soul. If "we" feel someone else's pain or share their happiness, there is a communion of affection and feeling which suggests, in Plotinus' eyes, that all souls are one. In this passage, "we" are human beings or souls insofar as they have a body, feel pain and pleasure, and are capable of friendship and sympathy.

Plotinus then addresses the second problem: that one soul is rational and the other irrational. A multiplicity of capacities does not contradict the unity, he thinks, as there are different forces in one seed as well.[37] This, however, does not explain why these capacities are not all in every being.[38]

> Well, in the case of the one soul which is said to be everywhere [in the body], the sense-perception is not alike in all the parts, and the reason is not in the whole, and the growth-principle is also in the parts where there is no perception; and all the same it runs up into one when they leave the body.[39]

In the human being, there are three kinds of soul, the vegetative, perception and reason, and they are not everywhere in the body in the same way. In other

36 IV 9 [8] 3, 1–3 (Armstrong): Καὶ μὴν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων φησὶν ὁ λόγος καὶ συμπαθεῖν ἀλλήλοις ἡμᾶς καὶ συναλγοῦντας ἐκ τοῦ ὁρᾶν καὶ διαχεομένους καὶ εἰς τὸ φιλεῖν ἑλκομένους κατὰ φύσιν·

37 Cf. IV 9 [8] 3, 10–18.

38 Cf. IV 9 [8] 3, 18–19.

39 IV 9 [8] 3, 19–23 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς μιᾶς ψυχῆς πανταχοῦ λεγομένης εἶναι ἡ αἴσθησις οὐκ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς μέρεσιν ὁμοία, ὅ τε λόγος οὐκ ἐν ὅλῳ, τό τε φυτικὸν καὶ ἐν οἷς μὴ αἴσθησις· καὶ ὅμως εἰς ἓν ἀνατρέχει ἀποστάντα τοῦ σώματος.

living beings, i.e. animals, we find perception, but not reason; in plants there is only the vegetative function. They all go back to their original unity when they separate themselves from the body. Plotinus does not only suggest that the soul as a whole leaves the body, but that every one of its different functions leaves the body.[40] And he suggests here that they come back to their original unity. The lower functions are not mortal, but a part or a derivation of soul so that they go back to it at death.

> But the nutritive power, if it comes from the whole, has also something from that [universal] soul. But why does not the nutritive power also come from our soul? Because what is nourished is a part of the whole, that which also is passively perceptive, but the perception which judges with the intellect belongs to the individual, and there was no need for this to shape that which had its shaping from the All. It would also have made this shaping, if it had not been necessary for it to be in this All.[41]

Plotinus often, though not always, says that the vegetative comes from the world-soul. If that is the case "our soul" only includes the higher functions—and these higher functions are presented as specifically human functions when Plotinus speaks of a perception which "judges with intelligence/discerns with the intellect (*krinousa meta nou*)."

Plotinus combines the idea of the unity of all souls and that of differences between individual souls mainly through the phenomenon of embodiment. Souls which are in bodies do not exercise the same functions, and they do not

---

40 The ending of this passage is a little difficult to understand as it is not quite clear what *apostanta* at the end of this passage relates to. Harder reads *apostantos tou sômatos* instead of *apostanta tou sômatos*, and he therefore speaks of a separation of the body from soul. Similarly Faggin, despite the fact his Greek text says: *apostanta tou sômatos*. According to Armstrong and Brisson/Pradeau *the soul* leaves the body (Armstrong translates "when it leaves the body," and "it" can only to refer soul which was previously mentioned. Cf. Brisson/Pradeau: "lorsqu'elle se retire du corps." Cf. Brisson and Pradeau 2003, 53, note 28: "Le sujet de la phrase est bien l'âme, et non pas la sensation, comme le suggère H.-S." Faggin assumes that it refers to the vegetative faculty), which makes sense, but is grammatically impossible, as it would have to be *apostasa* instead of *apostanta*. If *apostanta* is correct, Plotinus does not speak of a separation of the soul from the body, but of its different functions.

41 IV 9 [8] 3, 23–29 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Τὸ δὲ θρεπτικόν, εἰ ἐκ τοῦ ὅλου, ἔχει καὶ ἐκείνης. Διὰ τί οὖν οὐ καὶ παρὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς τὸ θρεπτικόν; Ὅτι τὸ τρεφόμενον μέρος τοῦ ὅλου, ὃ καὶ παθητικῶς αἰσθητικόν, ἡ δὲ αἴσθησις ἡ κρίνουσα μετὰ νοῦ ἑκάστου, ᾗ οὐδὲν ἔδει πλάττειν τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὅλου τὴν πλάσιν ἔχον. Ἐπεὶ κἂν ἐποίησεν αὐτήν, εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ τούτῳ ἔδει αὐτὴν εἶναι.

have the same experiences. Thus, their original unity is somehow split up or temporarily dissolved when they come to be in bodies.

However, in other texts, Plotinus assumes that individuality is not merely present in the bodily realm, but also in the intelligible world.[42] Some differences between souls can be explained through the phenomenon of embodiment, but not everything that is individual can be reduced to the body. Plotinus assumes that souls will not just dissolve into the higher soul or the intellect when they ascend, but keep some of their properties.[43]

3 Individuality

Plotinus continues the discussion of the individuality of human souls in view of the unity of souls[44] in IV 3 [27]. At the beginning of the long treatise *On the problems of the soul*, Plotinus explains that "our souls" do not come from the soul of the All. He opposes philosophers, probably Stoics, who think that the human souls come from the soul of the All,[45] but there are also passages in Plato's writings that seem to support this thesis.[46] Plotinus, however, sees the two as soul-sisters, both coming from soul itself.[47] They differ in the respective relations to their bodies. The world-soul does not leave the body as "our" soul does,[48] but it remains transcendent to the body in a way the individual souls can barely (or not at all) achieve:

> And the Soul of the All would always remain transcendent because it would have nothing to do with coming down, even with its lower part, nor with a turning to the things here below, but our souls would come down because they would have their part marked off for them in this sphere, and by the turning to them of that which needs their care.[49]

42 Cf. Karfík 2014, 108–112; Caluori 2020, 263–264.

43 Cf. the following chapter (31–34) and Wolfe 2010; Karfík 2014, 111–112; Nikulin 2019, 54–71.

44 Cf. above "Mine, yours, ours" (26–31) on IV 9 [8] and below "Who are we" (104–108) on VI 4 [22].

45 Cf. IV 3 [27] 1, 16–22. Cf. Brisson 2005, 213, note 14.

46 Cf. IV 3 [27] 1, 22–26 Plotinus alludes especially to two passages in Plato (*Phil.* 30a; *Tim.* 30b). Cf. Brisson 2005, 214, note 19.

47 Cf. Helleman-Elgersma 1980.

48 Cf. IV 3 [27] 4, 5–6.

49 IV 3 [27] 4, 21–25 (Armstrong): Καὶ τὴν μὲν τοῦ παντὸς ἀεὶ ὑπερέχειν τῷ μηδὲ εἶναι αὐτῇ τὸ κατελθεῖν μηδὲ τῷ κάτω μηδὲ ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν τῇδε, τὰς δ'ἡμετέρας τῷ τε εἶναι ἀφωρισμένον αὐταῖς τὸ μέρος ἐν τῷδε καὶ τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ τοῦ προσδεομένου φροντίσεως.

The world-soul is always linked to the body, and it is also, in its lowest form, responsible for ensoulment on a basic level, but it can nonetheless remain transcendent since its body does not require the same amount of attention and care. The world-soul reigns with a higher form of care as Plotinus shows in treatise IV 8 [6], while the individual soul has to be more hands-on.[50] Plotinus uses an image to clarify these two forms of care:

> The soul of the All (that is, its lowest part) would be like the soul in a great growing plant, which directs the plant without effort or noise; our lower part would be as if there were maggots in a rotten part of the plant—for that is what the ensouled body is like in the All. The rest of our soul, which is of the same nature as the higher parts of universal soul, would be like a gardener concerned about the maggots in the plant and anxiously caring for it.[51]

The image clearly shows that the individual soul and the world-soul deal with different tasks and difficulties. The lower part of our soul is directly involved in the "rotten part of the plant," while its higher part acts as the "gardener."[52] This suggests that this higher part is the rational soul and not the non-descended part,[53] since the latter would not be involved in the care of the material realm. The lower part is presented as "our lower part," i.e. as something that belongs to "us" and not merely as a function that stems from the world-soul.

The approximation of the higher soul to the higher form of the world-soul—"of the same nature"—leads to the question how we can still speak of individual souls:

> But how will one still be your soul, another this person's and another another's? Will it still belong to an individual in respect of its lower part, and not to that individual, but to that which is above, in respect of its higher part? But that way there will be Socrates whenever the soul of

50 Cf. IV 8 [6] 2, 24–33. Cf. on the topic of care D'Ancona 2003, 153–154.

51 IV 3 [27] 4, 26–33 (Armstrong): τῆς μὲν οὖν ἐοικυίας τῇ ἐν φυτῷ μεγάλῳ ψυχῇ, ἣ ἀπόνως τὸ φυτὸν καὶ ἀψόφως διοικεῖ, τοῦ κατωτάτω τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ παντός, τοῦ δὲ ἡμῶν κάτω, οἷον εἰ εὐλαὶ ἐν σαπέντι μέρει τοῦ φυτοῦ γίγνοιντο· οὕτω γὰρ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἔμψυχον ἐν τῷ παντί. Τῆς δὲ ἄλλης ψυχῆς τῆς ὁμοειδοῦς τῷ ἄνω τῆς ὅλης, οἷον εἴ τις γεωργὸς ἐν φροντίδι τῶν ἐν τῷ φυτῷ εὐλῶν γίνοιτο καὶ ταῖς μερίμναις πρὸς τῷ φυτῷ γίγνοιτο. On this passage cf. Kalligas 1988, 98.

52 Cf. Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 191.

53 Contra Brisson 2005, 220, note 101.

> Socrates is in a body, but he will perish whenever he is to the highest degree among what is best.[54]

If one assumes that only its lower part belongs to this body or living being, but not its upper part, then there is—in Plotinus' example—only a Socrates as long as his soul is in his body, but not after his return to the intelligible realm. Individuality would be limited to the soul's connection to the body,[55] but would be dissolved in the intelligible realm where all the souls are one. However, even though Plotinus always underscores the unity of all souls, he does not want to give up individuality:

> The answer is that nothing that really is perishes, since even in the intelligible realm the intellects there, just because they are not divided as bodies are, are not lost into a unity, but each remains as it is, preserving its actual being in its otherness. The same applies to souls too in their turn, depending as they do on each intellect, being rational projections of the intellects.[56]

The question of individuality in the intelligible and—in a more severe way—the question of forms of individuals is a difficult problem in Plotinian thought.[57] Plotinus clearly wants to show that there have to be distinctions in the intelligible realm, between intellects and the souls which depend on them, i.e. distinctions which are not based on corporeality. The individuality of a human being does not reside only it its connection to the body, but its soul and even its higher parts are individualized.[58] Individual souls are not to be dissolved into a general unity of souls.

---

54 IV 3 [27] 5, 1–5 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Ἀλλὰ πῶς ἔτι ἡ μὲν σή, ἡ δὲ τοῦδε, ἡ δὲ ἄλλου ἔσται; ἆρ' οὖν τοῦδε μὲν κατὰ τὸ κάτω, οὐ τοῦδε δέ, ἀλλ' ἐκείνου κατὰ τὸ ἄνω; Ἀλλ' οὕτω γε Σωκράτης μὲν ἔσται ὅταν ἐν σώματι καὶ ἡ Σωκράτους ψυχή· ἀπολεῖται δέ, ὅταν μάλιστα γένηται ἐν τῷ ἀρίστῳ.

55 This seems to be Aristotle's opinion. Cf. Sihvola 2008, pass, esp. 131–132.

56 IV 3 [27] 5, 5–10 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Ἢ ἀπολεῖται οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων· ἐπεὶ κἀκεῖ οἱ νόες οὐκ ἀπολοῦνται, ὅτι μὴ εἰσι σωματικῶς μεμερισμένοι, εἰς ἕν, ἀλλὰ μένει ἕκαστον ἐν ἑτερότητι ἔχον τὸ αὐτὸ ὅ ἐστιν εἶναι. Οὕτω τοίνυν καὶ ψυχαὶ ἐφεξῆς καθ' ἕκαστον νοῦν ἐξηρτημέναι, λόγοι νῶν οὖσαι.

57 Cf. especially V 7 [18]. Cf. Brisson 2005, 57–59; 220, note 105 (with further references). Cf. also Rist 1963; Blumenthal 1966; Armstrong 1979a; Kalligas 1997; Sorabji 2006, 123–124; Remes 2008b, 125–127; Stang 2016, 209–213 (with a detailed overview of the debate); Bertozzi 2021, 232–240 (who gives a detailed overview); Gerson 2021, 191–193.

58 Caluori 2020, 263–264.

However, Plotinus' interest in asking who "we" are is not to understand "what it is for me to be the particular human being that I am" or to become "the perfect me," "the divine me."[59] The ideal of perfection is the same for every soul, and the souls are not aware of their individuality when they are in the intelligible realm. But the individuality itself is not lost. Plotinus does not want the soul of a human being—Socrates in his example—to be dissolved into a higher unity of souls when it is separated from the body. Individuality does not disappear completely nor do all the memories of a particular human being.[60] "We" are individuals insofar as we are human beings. The goal is to transcend this individuality in the contemplation in the intelligible realm, but the goal is not to dissolve the individuality in an undistinguishable mixture. However, the goal is certainly not to develop individuality in itself. There is no room for the development of individual personalities in Plotinus.

4 We Living Beings

The general goal for the soul is the ascent, but it seems nonetheless important to understand how the soul works in the body. This is what "we" are now, in this sensible realm, and it is therefore important to understand what "we" are here as a starting point for the ascent. But Plotinus seems to be motivated by more than by the utility of this investigation. He often shows, and especially in treatises *On the problems of the soul* (IV 3–4 [27–28]), a vibrant interest in how the soul works in the body. He seems to be puzzled by this connection—as any Platonic philosopher tends to be—, but his reaction to the puzzlement is not merely to encourage the soul to depart as fast as possible, but he really wants to understand what this connection means for the soul.

Plotinus describes the earthly and human world in opposition to the world of the heavens.[61] Temporality is an important characteristic element of this state,[62] which also marks our kind of thinking:

---

59 Contra Wolfe 2010, 216.

60 Cf. IV 3 [27] 30 - IV 4 [28] 8. Cf. below 96–103.

61 Cf. IV 4 [28] 6, 13–15; IV 4 [28] 7, 9–10 (Dillon/Blumenthal): "but with us there is a reckoning of many and different days, because they are marked off by nights (παρὰ δὲ ἡμῖν μετροῦνται πολλαὶ καὶ ἡμέραι ἄλλαι)." This is equally true for the consideration of the movement on earth (IV 4 [28] 8, 24–27.)

62 Cf. IV 4 [28] 15, 10–13.

> But how is it that the soul's intellections and reasonings are not in us too in the same way, but here they are involved in temporal succession, with the consequent necessity for investigations?[63]

Noêsis belongs to the higher level of the intellect. The soul has this capacity, but here, in the sensible world, in the living being, "in us," it performs another kind of thought, i.e. discursive thought which takes place in time. Temporality and the temporal unfolding of thinking characterize what "we" are in this realm here. Here, we are not pure souls who can take part in timeless *noêsis*, but embodied beings who live their life in time, i.e. in a development of capacities and in an acquisition of knowledge through "investigations." "We" as living beings have to search for knowledge and acquire it over time, and we lack the access to contemplation, which, however, remains the goal. Our progress towards this goal is not only hindered by our current inability to rise to contemplation and the necessity to use rational thought. The soul is also harassed by passions, imaginations and desires. Plotinus compares the soul with an assembly in which the wise counselor cannot make himself heard in a noisy crowd.[64] This wise counselor, who should and who could rule, is what "we" are as the higher soul which should be in charge and determine the course. It is, however, not cut off from the desires, pleasures and pains. They should, as the image of the assembly shows, not determine the course of action, but the counselor, i.e. the higher soul, has to be able to hear from them. If "we" were unable to register hunger, thirst or pain, "we" as human beings would not survive. But the soul, and thus "we" as this higher soul, should not be affected by them. Pleasures and pain take place in the living being which has a shadow or trace of soul,[65] "but the pain of this body and this sort of pleasure come to us for dispassionate cognition".[66] By calling "our" knowledge *apathês* Plotinus makes clear that "we" stand—or rather should stand—on the side of the incorporeal soul which is unaffected due to its incorporeality.[67] "We" are not per se unaffected and identical to the higher soul, but this is the goal "we" should strive for.[68]

---

63 IV 4 [28] 17, 1–3 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Ἀλλὰ πῶς οὐ καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν οὕτως αἱ νοήσεις αἱ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ οἱ λόγοι, ἀλλ' ἐνταῦθα ἐν χρόνῳ καὶ τὸ ὕστερον καὶ αἱ ζητήσεις ὧδί;

64 Cf. IV 4 [28] 17, 3–37. Cf. Stock 2014, 98–102 (on imagination in this meeting, 98–102) and Stock 2019, 413–419 (on the image of the crowd and the counselor). Cf. also below 107; 138.

65 Cf. IV 4 [28] 18, 6–9. Cf. Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 375.

66 IV 4 [28] 18, 9–10 (Dillon/Blumenthal, slightly revised): ἡμῖν δὲ ἡ τούτου ἀλγηδὼν καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη ἡδονὴ εἰς γνῶσιν ἀπαθῆ ἔρχεται.

67 Cf. Brisson 2005, 253, note 146 who refers to III 6 [26]. Cf. on the impassivity of the soul Emilsson 1998, pass.; Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 378–379.

68 Unlike Emilsson 1998, 345 (who argues against Gerson 1994, 272–273n54) I do not think

In the context of these discussions, Plotinus does not only use the notion "we" in this way, he even draws attention to it and reflects on it as a philosophical term:

> When I say 'us' I mean the rest of the soul, in so far as even the body so qualified is not another's, but belongs to us; wherefore it is of concern to us, as belonging to us. For we are not this, nor yet have we been purged of it, but it depends on us and is suspended from us, whereas we exist in respect of our chief part, but nevertheless that other entity is ours, though in a different way.[69]

Plotinus explicitly defines "us" as the "rest of the soul," as opposed to the lower parts of the soul and the living being, but "the body so qualified" is still "ours" because it is linked to us. This is, however, not a static relation:

> Therefore it is of concern to us when it is experiencing pleasure and pain, and the more so the weaker we are, and to the extent that we do not separate ourselves from it, but hold this part of us to be the most valuable, and take it as the true human being, and, as it were, submerge ourselves into it.[70]

The importance of the body depends on the strength and effort of the "we." The soul can falsely identify the living being as the "true human being" and thereby lose its own value by sinking into the body. Then "we" would be "our body" instead of being soul. But "we" can also turn our attention to the higher levels and become what we should be. This passage clearly shows that *hêmeis* is designed to be a dynamic notion that reflects the human being's capacity to change, form itself, to ascend or to descend. If the term "we" were not a dynamic notion, it would not have this capacity to form and ascend built into it. Only if "we" are truly aware of our ability to change (for the worse and for the better)

---

that soul and self are identical, but rather that they should be, i.e. that we should become a "we" that is, like the soul, not affected by the pain.

69 IV 4 [28] 18, 10–15 (Dillon/Blumenthal, slightly revised): Λέγω δὲ ἡμῖν τῇ ἄλλῃ ψυχῇ, ἅτε καὶ τοῦ τοιοῦδε σώματος οὐκ ἀλλοτρίου, ἀλλ' ἡμῶν ὄντος· διὸ καὶ μέλει ἡμῖν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἡμῶν ὄντος. Οὔτε γὰρ τοῦτό ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς, οὔτε καθαροὶ τούτου ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ ἐξήρτηται καὶ ἐκκρέμαται ἡμῶν, ἡμεῖς δὲ κατὰ τὸ κύριον, ἡμῶν δὲ ἄλλως ὅμως τοῦτο.

70 IV 4 [28] 18, 15–19 (Dillon/Blumenthal, slightly revised): Διὸ καὶ ἡδομένου καὶ ἀλγοῦντος μέλει, καὶ ὅσῳ ἀσθενέστεροι μᾶλλον, καὶ ὅσῳ ἑαυτοὺς μὴ χωρίζομεν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἡμῶν τὸ τιμιώτατον καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τιθέμεθα καὶ οἷον εἰσδυόμεθα εἰς αὐτό.

can we make true use of our ability to ascend. It is in the individual's power to choose where to place the center of the "we." This determination of the "we's" power to decide leads to our next topic, i.e. the "we" as ethical subject.

CHAPTER 3

We as Ethical Subject

1 Our Proper Activity

In the early treatise III 1 [3] *On destiny*,[1] Plotinus develops the idea of the "we" as the ethical subject by introducing the topic of human aspirations and actions. The starting point of the discussion are the "first and the transcendent causes."[2] Plotinus refers to and refutes several theories, for instance the argument for the atomic basis of reality and the existence of corporeal first causes, but also the idea of astrological determinism. He criticizes both Epicurean theories, which attribute everything to the chance of atomic movement, and Stoic theories of a fate that determines everything.[3] In these discussions and refutations the notions of *hêmeis* and *hêmeteron*, of what "we" are and what is "ours," play an important role.

The first target of Plotinus' censure are Epicurean philosophers who assume the existence of atoms that are said to be the cause of the "individual things" through "their clashings and interlockings with one another."[4] All things and all movements are caused by the movements of atoms, including the soul, which is considered corporeal. This entails that affections and ethical behavior are of atomic origin as well. Therefore Plotinus writes: "even our own impulses and dispositions, they say, are as the atoms make them."[5] Plotinus' main criticism is that the atomists introduce necessity and force when they posit a material origin for impulses and dispositions. We would then have no freedom to resists impulses and dispositions because they would be subject to the same necessity as everything else that happens in the material world. The same is true for those who introduce other bodies, i.e. the four elements,[6] as "principles" and make "reality the slave of the compulsion which comes from them."[7] Before developing his refutations Plotinus mentions another position, Stoic or Stoicizing Platonist, which seems to have similar consequences:

1 Cf. Eliasson 2008, 171–180; Kalligas 2014, 413–439.
2 III 1 [3] 2, 3–4 (Armstrong): ἐπὶ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἐπέκεινα αἴτια.
3 Cf. Brisson and Laurent 2002, 143–147.
4 III 1 [3] 2, 9–13 (Armstrong).
5 III 1 [3] 2, 13–14 (Armstrong): καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας ὁρμὰς καὶ διαθέσεις ταύτῃ ἔχειν, ὡς ἂν ἐκεῖναι ποιῶσιν.
6 Cf. Brisson and Laurent 2002, 163, note 19.
7 III 1 [3] 2, 14–17 (Armstrong).

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_005

> Others go back to the principle of the universe and derive everything from it, saying that it is a cause which penetrates all things, and one which does not only move but also makes each single thing; they posit it as fate and the supremely dominant cause, which is itself all things; they say that not only the other things which come into being, but also our thoughts come from its movements, as when the individual parts of a living creature are not moved by themselves but by the ruling principle in each living thing.[8]

This theory attributes "our thoughts" (*dianoêseis*) to one highest cause, to fate, which directs the thoughts just as the authoritative part of the soul guides the limbs of the body.

Thus Plotinus rejects both the Epicurean and the Stoic theory because, in either case, something that is called "ours" would be attributed to another cause, either to the corporeal cause of atoms or to the supreme cause of fate. Even though Plotinus has not come to the refutation yet, it is already clear that this attribution of what is "ours" to another cause will be at the center of his subsequent refutation. The third position he mentions is the astrologer's assumption that everything is caused by the All, planets and stars. The fourth position ("chain of causation") seems to be Stoic and introduces some kind of fate.[9]

After having briefly presented these theories Plotinus begins his refutation. The question of the *hêmeis* and of what belongs to "us" plays an important role in these arguments. Plotinus first considers the theory of atoms and elements. He fears that this theory does not allow order to appear and would therefore make prophecy impossible. Furthermore, even though bodies could be struck and moved by bodies, it does not seem possible to consider "actions and affections of the soul (*erga* and *pathê*)" as the result of the "movements of atoms."[10] Both arguments are only valid if one assumes the existence of prophecy on the one hand and of an immaterial soul on the other. If there is no prophecy and no order, there may well be only random atomic movement behind every-

---

8 III 1 [3] 2, 17–25 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Οἱ δ' ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχὴν ἐλθόντες ἀπ' αὐτῆς κατάγουσι πάντα, διὰ πάντων φοιτήσασαν αἰτίαν καὶ ταύτην οὐ μόνον κινοῦσαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ποιοῦσαν ἕκαστα λέγοντες, εἱμαρμένην ταύτην καὶ κυριωτάτην αἰτίαν θέμενοι, αὐτὴν οὖσαν τὰ πάντα· οὐ μόνον τὰ ἄλλα, ὅσα γίνεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας διανοήσεις ἐκ τῶν ἐκείνης ἰέναι κινημάτων, οἷον ζῴου μορίων κινουμένων ἑκάστων οὐκ ἐξ αὑτῶν, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ἡγεμονοῦντος ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν ζῴων.

9 Cf. Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 411–412; Brisson and Laurent 2002, 163–164, notes 24 and 25; Eliasson 2008, 171–172.

10 III 1 [3] 3, 19–20 (Armstrong, slightly revised): τὰ δὲ δὴ ψυχῆς ἔργα καὶ πάθη τίσι κινήσεσι τῶν ἀτόμων ἀναθήσει τις;

thing. And the effect of atoms on the soul is impossible only if one assumes that the soul is immaterial. Atoms could easily work on a material soul as the atomists conceive it. These arguments are clearly not meant to persuade atomistic philosophers, but they are directed at Plotinus' disciples who are of course convinced of these two premises.

Plotinus then offers more arguments against the theory of atoms. The first question he asks is: "And [what happens] when the soul opposes the affections of the body?"[11] He probably thinks of cases in which someone is thirsty or hungry and does not eat or drink. Plato mentions similar examples in his discussion of the tripartite soul in the *Republic*,[12] but Plato uses them there as a proof for the existence of different functions of the soul, not of the opposition of body and soul, which he does underscore in the *Phaedo*, and which is at stake here in Plotinus. Atomic movements also seem an inadequate explanation for the spiritual developments of human beings: "By what movements of atoms will one human being be compelled to be a geometer, another study arithmetic and astronomy, and another be a wise person?"[13] How could material causes incite someone to study one matter and even to philosophize? These rhetorical arguments are only the beginning of a more serious discussion of what "we" are in case we assume atoms as cause.

> Our activity, and our nature as living beings, will be altogether done away with if we are carried about where the [primary] bodies take us, as they push us along like lifeless/soulless bodies.[14]

Plotinus speaks of "our *activity* (*ergon*)" and of our "nature as living beings." First of all, he distinguishes living beings from lifeless beings. The latter are subject to external causes and cannot oppose their effects. Living beings on the other hand have a life of their own and are not just subject to external causes. If "we" were pushed around by atoms, "we" would not even be a living being anymore. Secondly, Plotinus distinguishes human beings from other living beings, i.e. from plants and animals which possess some form of soul, yet not the human soul. This distinction is implicit in the notion of *to hêmeteron*

---

11 III 1 [3] 3, 23–24 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ὅταν δὲ δὴ ἐναντιῶται ψυχὴ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος παθήμασι;

12 Cf. Plato, *Rep*. 437b–e.

13 III 1 [3] 3, 25–27 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Κατὰ ποίας δὲ φορὰς ἀτόμων ὁ μὲν γεωμετρικὸς ἀναγκασθήσεται εἶναι, ὁ δὲ ἀριθμητικὴν καὶ ἀστρονομίαν ἐπισκέψεται, ὁ δὲ σοφὸς ἔσται;

14 III 1 [3] 3, 27–29 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ὅλως γὰρ τὸ ἡμέτερον ἔργον καὶ τὸ ζῴοις εἶναι ἀπολεῖται φερομένων ᾗ τὰ σώματα ἄγει ὠθοῦντα ἡμᾶς ὥσπερ ἄψυχα σώματα.

ergon, of "our activity" or, as Armstrong translates, of "our human activity."[15] Even though Plotinus does not spell it out, it is, of course, the activity of rational thought that makes a living being human and is "our activity." Thus, this passage defines "us" as a specific form of living beings, i.e. as rational living beings.

The following chapter discusses the topic of fate, and Plotinus argues against too strict a notion of fate.[16] If one assumes a necessity which is too intense, this undoes the causal connection as the difference between cause and caused disappears.[17] The consequence would be:

> So, on this assumption, we are not we, nor is there any act which is our own. We ourselves do not reason, but our considered decisions/resolutions are the reasonings of another. Nor do we act, any more than our feet kick; it is we who kick through parts of ourselves.[18]

"We" would be without a proper activity. "Our" thoughts and actions would not belong to "us," but to someone else. Plotinus uses the expression *autos* to emphasize that "we ourselves (*autoi*)" would not reason. And he writes that "we" (*hêmeis*) would not be "we" (*hêmeis*). Thought in the sense of rational thought (*logizometha*) and action (*prattomen*) are essential attributes of the *hêmeis*. It is impossible to assume that they could be withdrawn from "us":

> But really, each individual must be individual; there must be our actions and thoughts; each one's good and bad actions must come from himself, and we must not attribute the doing of bad actions at least to the All.[19]

"We" are to be understood as individual beings (*hekastos*) which have to be responsible for their actions. It is noteworthy that Plotinus specifically mentions "bad actions" here. "We" are not supposed to rid ourselves of the responsibility for bad actions by attributing them to a higher cause: "we" are the ethical subject, and "we" have to assume responsibility. "We" is no longer the human

15 Harder translates "unsere eigentlich menschliche Wirksamkeit."

16 Cf. III 1 [3] 4, 12–20.

17 Cf. Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 411. On fate and responsibility cf. Noble 2022, 400–404.

18 III 1 [3] 4, 20–24 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ὥστε οὔτε ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς οὔτε τι ἡμέτερον ἔργον· οὐδὲ λογιζόμεθα αὐτοί, ἀλλ' ἑτέρου λογισμοὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα βουλεύματα· οὐδὲ πράττομεν ἡμεῖς, ὥσπερ οὐδ' οἱ πόδες λακτίζουσιν, ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς διὰ μερῶν τῶν ἑαυτῶν.

19 III 1 [3] 4, 24–28 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ἀλλὰ γὰρ δεῖ καὶ ἕκαστον ἕκαστον εἶναι καὶ πράξεις ἡμετέρας καὶ διανοίας ὑπάρχειν καὶ τὰς ἑκάστου καλάς τε καὶ αἰσχρὰς πράξεις παρ'αὐτοῦ ἑκάστου, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῷ παντὶ τὴν γοῦν τῶν αἰσχρῶν ποίησιν ἀνατιθέναι.

being or a specific living being, but an ethical subject that is responsible for all its actions, good and bad. The inclusion of bad actions shows that this "we" is not an impassive soul, which could neither suffer nor err. It is the human soul in all its aspects, including passions, lusts, affections and a rationality which may or may not guide actions properly.

Thus Plotinus uses similar arguments against those who assume that the movements of the sky determine everything.[20] He thereby continues the definition of the "we":

> In answer to this we must say, first, that this man too, in a different way, attributes to those principles what is ours, acts of will, and affections, vices and impulses, but gives us nothing and leaves us to be stones set rolling, but not human beings who have a work to do of ourselves and from our own nature.[21]

The previous passage had attributed thought and actions to "us." Now Plotinus enumerates "acts of will, and affections, vices and impulses" as what is called "ours" (*ta hêmetera*). Again Plotinus includes bad emotions and impulses. "We" are defined as human beings (*anthrôpoi*), who are not free of affections and emotions, and who have their own "work" (*ergon*) due to their "nature." Affections and emotions belong to this "we," but also good and bad actions and thereby "acts of will" and reason. "We" are beings who are affected by emotions and who have the freedom to decide on a course of action. *Hêmeis* is presented as the subject of ethical responsibility. External forces or the body can thus never suffice as an explanation for human action.

However, the attribution of activity to "us" does not exclude external effects.

> But one must give to us what is ours (though there must come to what is ours, already something and our own, a certain amount from the All), and make a distinction between what we do and what we experience of necessity and not attribute everything to those principles.[22]

---

20 Cf. III 1 [3] 5, 1–15. Cf. Gurtler 1984, 396–397.

21 III 1 [3] 5, 15–20 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Πρὸς δὴ ταῦτα πρῶτον μὲν ἐκεῖνο ῥητέον, ὅτι καὶ οὗτος ἕτερον τρόπον ἐκείνοις ἀνατίθησι τὰ ἡμέτερα, βουλὰς καὶ πάθη, κακίας τε καὶ ὁρμάς, ἡμῖν δὲ οὐδὲν διδοὺς λίθοις φερομένοις καταλείπει εἶναι, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνθρώποις ἔχουσι παρ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῶν φύσεως ἔργον.

22 III 1 [3] 5, 20–24 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ἀλλὰ χρὴ διδόναι μὲν τὸ ἡμέτερον ἡμῖν, ἥκειν δὲ εἰς τὰ ἡμέτερα ἤδη τινὰ ὄντα καὶ οἰκεῖα ἡμῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς ἄττα, καὶ διαιρούμενον, τίνα μὲν ἡμεῖς ἐργαζόμεθα, τίνα δὲ πάσχομεν ἐξ ἀνάγκης, μὴ πάντα ἐκείνοις ἀνατιθέναι· Cf. III 2 [47] 10, 11–12.

Again, Plotinus speaks of *to hêmeteron*/*ta hêmetera* and of *oikeia hêmôn*, of what belongs to us. This has to be attributed to "us" and should not be given to the All or other principles. But "we" are not just ethical subjects, but also living beings with body and soul.

> And something certainly must come to us from the regions and the difference of the surrounding atmosphere, for instance, heat or coldness in the temperaments, but something also comes from our parents; at any rate, we are generally like our parents in our appearance and some of the irrational affections of the soul.[23]

Places and regions or the atmosphere can have an effect on human beings, on "us," but the influence of the parents is more important as "we" are often similar to them in aspect and (irrational) character. It is interesting that Plotinus mentions "our" looks and the irrational affects of the soul—these do not belong to the soul in the higher sense, the rational soul, but to the body and the lower soul, the image of the soul, i.e. not what was described as "ours" just before. Therefore "we" signifies on the one hand human beings as living beings and on the other hand as what can distance itself from the body, i.e. the higher soul. And that is, of course, what "we" should do. "We" have to resist corporeal influences.[24] Passions and bad actions belong to "us," but "we" can also oppose them. The conflict is in "us," in "us" insofar as "we" are human beings and have not returned to the intelligible realm. And "we" are capable of opposing the passions, as Plotinus' refutation of the final theory shows one more time.

> This opinion is close to that which says that all states and movements, both our own and all others, come from the soul of the universe, even if it does allow us, even as individuals, some room for action of our own.[25]

---

23 III 1 [3] 5, 24–28 (Armstrong, slightly revised): καὶ ἰέναι μὲν παρὰ τῶν τόπων καὶ τῆς διαφορᾶς τοῦ περιέχοντος εἰς ἡμᾶς οἷον θερμότητας ἢ ψύξεις ἐν τῇ κράσει, ἰέναι δὲ καὶ παρὰ τῶν γειναμένων· τοῖς γοῦν γονεῦσιν ὅμοιοι καὶ τὰ εἴδη ὡς τὰ πολλὰ καί τινα τῶν ἀλόγων τῆς ψυχῆς παθῶν.

24 Armstrong ("our resistances") and Brisson/Laurent ("la résistance que nous opposons"). Harder speaks of an "opposition of the soul"—he probably thinks of the expression used before of the "irrational affections of the soul" (III 1 [3] 5, 27–28). Thereby he identifies *hêmeis* as soul, as do Brisson and Laurent 2002, 166, note 51. Cf. III 1 [3] 5, 31–33 (Armstrong, slightly revised): "The resistances, also, to the temperaments of the body and lusts could appropriately be mentioned here."

25 III 1 [3] 7, 4–8 (Armstrong): "Εστι μὲν οὖν καὶ αὕτη ἡ δόξα ἐγγὺς ἐκείνης τῆς πᾶσαν καὶ σχέσιν

Despite the fact that this theory seems to leave some room for "action of our own," it assumes a strict "necessity" and "it is impossible for each individual thing not to happen" since "all causes are included in fate."[26] This excludes things which are in our power, *par' hêmôn*:[27]

> If they are like this, starting from a single principle, they will leave nothing for us except to move wherever they push us. For our mental images will depend on pre-existing circumstances and our impulses will follow our mental images, and 'what is in our power' will be a mere word; we do not have the impulses, if the impulse is produced in accordance with those pre-existing causes; our part will be like that of animals and babies, driven by blind impulses, and mad persons [...][28]

The notion of such a "fate" would take away our status as "we." There would be no *eph'hêmin*, nothing "in our power."[29] To have something that is in our power and not to be driven by external causes distinguishes human beings from other living beings, from babies and those who are out of their (rational) mind. What is essentially human is not simply the capacity of rational thought but the capacity for responsible, self-determined action and therefore the option to oppose affections of the body. Animals, children, and mad persons follow their instincts and affections, but a grown-up human being has the rationality to act and judge differently, not to follow the course the affections indicate.

The refutation of these various theories has already given us a fair amount of ideas on the "we" as ethical subject. In chapter 8 Plotinus develops his own solution to the initial questions and thereby continues to devise the notion of "we."

καὶ κίνησιν ἡμετέραν τε καὶ πᾶσαν ἐκ τῆς τῶν ὅλων ψυχῆς ἥκειν λεγούσης, εἰ καὶ βούλεταί τι ἡμῖν καὶ ἑκάστοις χαρίζεσθαι εἰς τὸ παρ' ἡμῶν ποιεῖν τι.

26 III 1 [3] 7, 8–12 (Armstrong): Ἔχει μὲν οὖν τὴν πάντως πάντων ἀνάγκην, καὶ πάντων εἱλημμένων τῶν αἰτίων οὐκ ἔστιν ἕκαστον μὴ οὐ γίνεσθαι· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔτι τὸ κωλῦσον ἢ ἄλλως γενέσθαι ποιῆσον, εἰ πάντα εἱλῆπται ἐν τῇ εἱμαρμένῃ.

27 Cf. Brisson and Laurent 2002, 167, note 64.

28 III 1 [3] 7, 12–19 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Τοιαῦτα δὲ ὄντα ὡς ἀπὸ μιᾶς ἀρχῆς ὡρμημένα ἡμῖν οὐδὲν καταλείψει, ἢ φέρεσθαι ὅπῃ ἂν ἐκεῖνα ὠθῇ. Αἵ τε γὰρ φαντασίαι τοῖς προηγησαμένοις αἵ τε ὁρμαὶ κατὰ ταύτας ἔσονται, ὄνομά τε μόνον τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἔσται· οὐ γὰρ ὅτι ὁρμῶμεν ἡμεῖς, ταύτῃ τι πλέον ἔσται τῆς ὁρμῆς κατ' ἐκεῖνα γεννωμένης· τοιοῦτόν τε τὸ ἡμέτερον ἔσται, οἷον καὶ τὸ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων καὶ τὸ τῶν νηπίων καθ' ὁρμὰς τυφλὰς ἰόντων καὶ τὸ τῶν μαινομένων·

29 On the notion of the *eph'hêmin* in Plotinus and in his predecessors cf. Eliasson 2008, pass.; on this passage 172–175.

> What other cause, then, occurs to us, besides these, which will leave nothing causeless, and will preserve sequence and order, and allow us to be something, and not do away with prophecies and divinations?[30]

None of the refuted theories fulfills all three of Plotinus' conditions: "We" have to be "something," thinking and acting beings, i.e. "we" cannot be just another element in the inflexible causal chains, determined by other causes; order is present; and prophecies are possible. The only principle that, according to Plotinus, can guarantee the order of the universe and "our" freedom at the same time is the soul, soul itself and the single souls.[31]

For Plotinus, human beings are calculating subjects: "we" feel the impulses of appetite and emotion and are aware of the constraints of the universe and the limits of human action in the present world, but "we" make judgments even in our present embodied state. When soul is "without a body" it is "in absolute control of itself and free," but it is no longer completely free when it connects itself to a body.[32] However, it can work its way toward a state in which the body has no influence over it anymore. Whether it succeeds or not depends on its quality. A good soul will oppose circumstances and external influences; it will change them or hardly yield to them and will not lose its good character even during its stay in the body. The bad soul will be changed to the worse by the body and external circumstances.[33]

These ideas lead to a new definition of necessity which also entails a slight variation of the understanding of the *hêmeis*: "So all is necessary that comes about by a mixture of choice and chance."[34] There are two options for the soul.

> When therefore, the soul is altered by the external causes, and so does something and drives on in a sort of blind rush, neither its action nor its disposition is to be called free; this applies, too, when it is worse from itself and does not altogether have its impulses right or in control.[35]

---

30 III 1 [3] 8, 1–4 (Armstrong): Τίς οὖν ἄλλη αἰτία παρὰ ταύτας ἐπελθοῦσα ἀναίτιόν τε οὐδὲν καταλείψει ἀκολουθίαν τε τηρήσει καὶ τάξιν ἡμᾶς τέ τι εἶναι συγχωρήσει προρρήσεις τε καὶ μαντείας οὐκ ἀναιρήσει;

31 Cf. III 1 [3] 8, 4–8.

32 III 1 [3] 8, 9–11 (Armstrong): Ἄνευ μὲν οὖν σώματος οὖσα κυριωτάτη τε αὐτῆς καὶ ἐλευθέρα καὶ κοσμικῆς αἰτίας ἔξω· ἐνεχθεῖσα δὲ εἰς σῶμα οὐκέτι πάντα κυρία, ὡς ἂν μεθ' ἑτέρων ταχθεῖσα.

33 Cf. III 1 [3] 8, 14–20.

34 III 1 [3] 9, 1–2 (Armstrong): Ἀναγκαῖα μὲν οὖν ταῦτα, ὅσα προαιρέσει καὶ τύχαις κραθέντα γίνεται·

35 III 1 [3] 9, 4–9 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ὅταν μὲν οὖν ἀλλοιωθεῖσα παρὰ τῶν ἔξω ψυχὴ

Such a bad soul does not have anything that belongs to itself and is its own; its actions are not free. It does not assume the responsibility for its actions, but is driven around by them—it is, as Plotinus writes, "altered by the external causes." It is, however, in the soul's power to change this:

> When, however, in its impulse it has as director its own pure and untroubled reason, then this impulse alone is said to be in our power and free; this is our own activity, which does not come from somewhere else but from within, from the pure soul, from a primary principle which directs and is in control, not suffering error from ignorance or defeat from the violence of the passions, which come upon it and drive and drag it about, and do not allow any acts to come from us any more but only passive responses.[36]

An impulse (*hormê*) which is pure and free from passions leads to a free action which is *eph'hêmin*, in our power and not subject to external causes.

At the end of his treatise Plotinus—or maybe Porphyry[37]—writes "that all things are indicated [by the stars] and all things happen according to causes;" there are two kinds of causes: "some happenings are brought about by the soul, others through other causes."[38] External causes are not the sole cause; the soul is a cause as well—under certain circumstances:

> And souls, in all that they do, when they do it according to right reason, act of themselves, whenever they do act, but in everything else are hindered in their own action and are passive rather than active.[39]

πράττῃ τι καὶ ὁρμᾷ οἷον τυφλῇ τῇ φορᾷ χρωμένη, οὐχὶ ἑκούσιον τὴν πρᾶξιν οὐδὲ τὴν διάθεσιν λεκτέον· καὶ ὅταν αὐτὴ παρ' αὐτῆς χείρων οὖσα οὐκ ὀρθαῖς πανταχοῦ οὐδὲ ἡγεμονούσαις ταῖς ὁρμαῖς ᾖ χρωμένη.

36 III 1 [3] 9, 9–16 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Λόγον δὲ ὅταν ἡγεμόνα καθαρὸν καὶ ἀπαθῆ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἔχουσα ὁρμᾷ, ταύτην μόνην τὴν ὁρμὴν φατέον εἶναι ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ ἑκούσιον, καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ἡμέτερον ἔργον, ὃ μὴ ἄλλοθεν ἦλθεν, ἀλλ' ἔνδοθεν ἀπὸ καθαρᾶς τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πρώτης ἡγουμένης καὶ κυρίας, ἀλλ' οὐ πλάνην ἐξ ἀγνοίας παθούσης ἢ ἥτταν ἐκ βίας ἐπιθυμιῶν, αἳ προσελθοῦσαι ἄγουσι καὶ ἕλκουσι καὶ οὐκέτι ἔργα ἐῶσιν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ παθήματα παρ' ἡμῶν.

37 Cf. Brisson and Laurent 2002, 168, note 79 who refer to M.-O. Goulet-Cazé; Bréhier as the origin of this idea. Cf. also Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 419. Schwyzer thinks that Bréhier's argument against the authenticity is insufficient (Schwyzer 1951, 497).

38 III 1 [3] 10, 1–3 (Armstrong).

39 III 1 [3] 10, 4–7 (Armstrong): Πραττούσας δὲ ψυχὰς ὅσα πράττουσι κατὰ μὲν λόγον ποιούσας ὀρθὸν παρ' αὐτῶν πράττειν, ὅταν πράττωσι, τὰ δ' ἄλλα ἐμποδιζομένας τὰ αὐτῶν πράττειν, πάσχειν τε μᾶλλον ἢ πράττειν.

By and only by following the *orthos logos*, souls determine their own actions. If they do not, they will be passive, they will suffer instead of acting, and they will not have something of their own anymore. Unreasonable acts therefore have external causes; "but the best actions come from us; for this is the nature we are of, when we are alone."[40]

According to the last paragraph "we" will do the good when "we" act according to reason. If "we" do not do this, "we" are not acting out of our own self-determination. The sages (*spoudaioi*) would do the good out of themselves, the others only when they "have a breathing space," when they are "not being hindered."[41] When subject to external influences they are neither free nor self-determined. Plotinus is not, however, simply distinguishing between grades of soul (the elect from the damned so to speak). He imagines possible a development in the soul. The responsibility for good and bad actions, which Plotinus had underlined in the first chapters of this treatise, now seems a condition for the improvement of the soul. In order to define ourselves as ethical subjects "we" have to assume the responsibility for our thoughts and actions and to turn "us" from a passive state into an active responsible agent.[42] Only when "we" understand and accept that "we" are an ethical agent and that it is in our power to change for the better "we" can actually start to change. This requires that "we" understand ourselves as responsible for our actions and especially for what was bad in order to set as a goal a higher stage in which the body and the passions loose their influence over us and allow us to be free.

2 Masters of Ourselves

Treatise VI 8 [39] comes back to the ethical issues which were central in treatise III 1 [3]. The notion of "what belongs to us" and "what is in our power" are central aspects of our understanding of what "we" are.

The title Porphyry gave treatise VI 8 [39] is "On the Voluntary and on the Free Will of the One."[43] This however raises the question of how to understand "in

40 III 1 [3] 10, 10–11 (Armstrong, slightly revised): τὰ δὲ ἄριστα παρ' ἡμῶν· ταύτης γὰρ καὶ τῆς φύσεώς ἐσμεν, ὅταν μόνοι ὦμεν·

41 III 1 [3] 10, 11–15 (Armstrong): καὶ τούς γε σπουδαίους πράττειν καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τὰ καλὰ πράττειν, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους, καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἀναπνεύσωσι συγχωρηθέντες τὰ καλὰ πράττειν, οὐκ ἄλλοθεν λαβόντας τὸ φρονεῖν, ὅταν φρονῶσι, μόνον δὲ οὐ κωλυθέντας.

42 On agency cf. also Hutchinson 2018, 152–175, yet with less interest in the "we."

43 Cf. on the title Corrigan and Turner 2017, 123–124. On this treatise cf. also Leroux 1990; Beierwaltes 1999; Gerson 2014; Corrigan and Turner 2017. On the notion of *eph'hêmin* in this treatise cf. Eliasson 2008, 187–215.

their power" in the case of the One.[44] In order to answer this question, Plotinus feels the need to start on the human level and to inquire what constitutes us: "But for the time being, we must postpones these issues and first inquire as we usually do whether there is anything that happens to be in *our* power."[45] Plotinus' starting point is to investigate how it works in "us," in human beings; then he will transfer this terminology and understanding to the higher levels of being, to the gods and especially to the One. The notion *eph'hêmin* is at the center of this discussion, and Plotinus refer to older philosophical discussions, especially by Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias and also by Stoic philosophers.[46]

Plotinus first wants to define the notion "in our power" in order to clarify whether this notion can be transferred to "the gods" or "god," i.e. to the level of the intellect and the One.[47] If it can be transferred, it has to be made clear how we have to understand the notion on the different levels.[48] Thus Plotinus writes:

> I myself think that when we are moved by opposing chances and compulsions and violent onslaughts of passions possessing our soul, we accept all these things as our masters, and, enslaved to them and carried wherever they lead us, we are at a loss whether we are not nothing and whether there is anything in our power—as if what would be in our power is that which we will to do and do, when we are not enslaved by chance, compulsion or strong passions, with nothing opposing our wills. But if so, our notion of what is in our power would be enslaved to our will and would or would not happen to the extent we willed it.[49]

---

44 Cf. VI 8 [39] 1, 1–11. On divine will cf. Horn 2007. Lavaud remarks that Plotinus opposes Alexander of Aphrodisias who, in his treatise *On fate*, supports the view that gods have no free power as it is in their nature to be as they are, and this is not in their power. Alexander considers such a necessity of higher worth than human freedom. Cf. Lavaud 2007, 177. Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato*, 204, 12–15. Cf. Corrigan and Turner 2017, 131–134.

45 VI 8 [39] 1, 13–16 (Corrigan/Turner): Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἀναβλητέον, πρότερον δὲ ἐφ' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, ἐφ' ὧν καὶ ζητεῖν ἔθος, εἴ τι ἐφ' ἡμῖν ὂν τυγχάνει.

46 Cf. Lavaud 2007, 175–194; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 135–140; Eliasson 2008 who discusses all these sources in detail. There is, as he says, no consensus as to which influences are most important (169).

47 VI 8 [39] 1, 16–19.

48 Cf. VI 8 [39] 1, 20–21.

49 VI 8 [39] 1, 22–33 (Corrigan/Turner): Ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι, ἐν ταῖς ἐναντίαις κινούμενοι τύχαις τε καὶ ἀνάγκαις καὶ παθῶν ἰσχυραῖς προσβολαῖς τὴν ψυχὴν κατεχούσαις, ἅπαντα ταῦτα κύρια νομίσαντες εἶναι καὶ δουλεύοντες αὐτοῖς καὶ φερόμενοι ᾗ ἐκεῖνα ἄγοι, μή ποτε οὐδέν ἐσμεν οὐδέ τί ἐστιν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἠπορήσαμεν, ὡς τούτου ἐσομένου ἂν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, ὃ μὴ τύχαις δουλεύοντες μηδὲ ἀνάγκαις

Plotinus decisively gives his own opinion (*egô men oimai*) in addressing the question how to explain what is "in our power," and he seems to mix Stoic and Aristotelian concerns. Fate and constraints oppress and determine human beings, passions unsettle the soul and let human beings—"us"—appear as their slaves who have to obey their commands and yield to their influence. However, the idea of a "we" only makes sense when there is something "in our power." "We" are characterized by being not just a plaything of fate and passion, but "we" decide and act. Since Plotinus talks about acting, he clearly speaks of human beings, with a body, but who are—due to their soul—capable of autonomous actions. If this were not the case we could not speak of a "we." The fact that the passions beset "us" is no reason to doubt the existence of the "we." Plotinus thus diverges from philosophers like Epictetus who do not consider actions which can be hindered through external circumstances as *eph'hêmin*.[50] According to such a view an action which is performed against a passion would not fall into the category "in our power" since the passion would or could be hindering the will.[51] Plotinus, however, is not that severe. Such actions can still be in "our power."

At the end of the passage, Plotinus uses the concept of the will (*boulêsis*). If we assume that only that is in our power which we do when nothing opposes our will, then "in our power" would be only defined—or, as Plotinus puts it, "enslaved"—by our will. Plotinus does not explain why this seems unreasonable, but he may be thinking of Aristotle's argument regarding the definition of "choice" (*prohairesis*). Aristotle says that choice cannot be wish/will (*boulêsis*) since we can wish for something that is impossible whereas choice seems to be directed at "what is in our power".[52] The will alone does not define "what is in our power." Therefore, a further clarification seems necessary for Plotinus:

> For everything that is voluntary is done knowingly and without violent force and what is in our power is that of whose doing we are masters.[53]

μηδὲ πάθεσιν ἰσχυροῖς πράξαιμεν ἂν βουληθέντες οὐδενὸς ἐναντιουμένου ταῖς βουλήσεσιν. Εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, εἴη ἂν ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, ὃ τῇ βουλήσει δουλεύει καὶ παρὰ τοσοῦτον ἂν γένοιτο ἢ μή, παρ' ὅσον βουληθείημεν ἄν. Cf. also III 2 [47] 9, 2–3.

50 Cf. for instance Epictetus, *Ench*. 1. 1,1–2,1. Cf. Bobzien 1998, 332; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 137–139.

51 Therefore Lavaud's translation of the part of the sentence starting with *hôs* with "pour autant que" is problematic, since it suggests that Plotinus now presents his own, *right* opinion.

52 Aristotle, *EN* III.2. 1111b19–30 (my transl.).

53 VI 8 [39] 1, 33–34 (Corrigan/Turner): Ἑκούσιον μὲν γὰρ πᾶν, ὃ μὴ βίᾳ μετὰ τοῦ εἰδέναι, ἐφ' ἡμῖν δέ, ὃ καὶ κύριοι πρᾶξαι.

This definition of *hêkousion* and *eph'hêmin* contains allusions to Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias.[54] In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines "involuntary" as an "action being one done under compulsion or through ignorance" while a "voluntary act would seem to be an act of which the origin lies in the agent, who knows the particular circumstances in which he is acting."[55] Aristotle does not distinguish between *eph'hêmin* and *hekousion*, but he distinguishes the "voluntary" which also belongs to children and other living beings from "choice" which is closer to virtue.[56]

Alexander of Aphrodisias differentiates between the two notions, but his definition is also distinct from the one Plotinus offers here. In his treatise *On fate*, Alexander gives the following definition:

> But the voluntary and what depends on us are not indeed the same thing. For it is what comes about from an assent that is not enforced that is voluntary; but it is what comes about with an assent that is in accordance with reason and judgement that depends on us.[57]

In the passage quoted above,[58] Plotinus seems to invert Alexander's definition. According to Alexander *eph'hêmin* is the higher notion, since it includes understanding, while the "voluntary" can belong to animals as well as to those who act freely, i.e. without constraint, but without knowledge.[59] Plotinus, on the other hand, considers the "voluntary," which includes knowledge, as the higher notion than *eph'hêmin* which is defined as being "master."[60] Oedipus is "mas-

---

54 Cf. Leroux 1990, 239–242; Lavaud 2007, 176–182; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 143–147.

55 Aristotle, *EN* III.1, 1111a22–24 (Rackham): Ὄντος δ' ἀκουσίου τοῦ βίᾳ καὶ δι' ἄγνοιαν, τὸ ἑκούσιον δόξειεν ἂν εἶναι οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰδότι τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα ἐν οἷς ἡ πρᾶξις. Cf. III.1, 1109b35–1110a1.

56 Aristotle, *EN* III.2, 1111b4–10 (Rackham).

57 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* 183, 26–29 (Sharples): οὐ μὴν ταὐτὸν τό τε ἑκούσιον καὶ τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν. ἑκούσιον μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἐξ ἀβιάστου γινόμενον συγκαταθέσεως, ἐφ' ἡμῖν δὲ τὸ γινόμενον μετὰ τῆς κατὰ λόγον τε καὶ κρίσιν συγκαταθέσεως.

58 VI 8 [39] 1, 33–34. See above p. 49.

59 Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* 183, 29–184, 1.

60 This interpretation is only valid if one follows Corrigan's and Turner's translation and does not translate the *kai* in the definition of the *eph'hêmin* as "also" (as it is done by Harder: "über dessen Ausführung wir überdies die Entscheidung haben;" Armstrong: "and in ower power which we are also competent to do;" Leroud: "c'est ce que nous sommes, en plus, maître d'accomplire;" Lavaud: "ce que nous accomplissons en en étant aussi les maîtres;" Eliasson 2008, 192–193). If one translates *kai* as "also" then *eph'hêmin* would be the higher notion, but it would be unclear what the addition of *kyrioi* to the other characteristics would change.

ter of killing" (*kyrios*), but it is not a free action as he lacks the knowledge that he is killing his father.[61] According to this example *eph'hêmin* does not include knowledge. It is an action which is not coerced, but which does not seem as vile as it would be if he had the full knowledge of the situation. This definition determines the *eph'hêmin* as that of what we are masters and have the ability to decide, of what we are *kyrioi*. The notion *kyrios* is suggested in the *Magna Moralia*[62] and can be found in Alexander of Aphrodisias in his discussions of the *eph'hêmin*.[63] Alexander says that carpenters are not coerced into making anything, but that they have the power (*exousia*) to accomplish something or not.[64] He concludes:

> And the things over which choice has control, too (that is, all actions that are in conformity with virtue or vice) are also thought to depend on us. If those things depend on us over which we seem to have control both of their being done and of their not being done [...][65]

The notion *kyrios* defines *eph'hêmin*,[66] and Plotinus seizes this connection. Nonetheless, he will distance himself from a definition of the *eph'hêmin* as a free choice to do something or *not* to do it. Such a free choice which can be a choice of the evil is not what he considers "in our power." Plotinus does not want to follow Aristotle or Alexander who consider "our power" as the option to choose the good or the evil.[67] He favors Socrates' idea that no one will do evil willingly.[68]

In what follows,[69] Plotinus treats only the notion of the *eph'hêmin*, not the *hêkousion*: "But we must investigate the following: This (function) that is cer-

---

61 VI 8 [39] 1, 36–38 (Corrigan/Turner).

62 Cf. e.g. *Magna moralia*, 11.8.5.2–5.

63 Cf. Corrigan and Turner 2017, 148 for usages of *kyrios* in Plato, Aristotle, etc.

64 Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* 169, 6–12.

65 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* 169, 12–15 (Sharples): ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὧν προαίρεσις κυρία (ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶν ὅσα κατ' ἀρετήν τε καὶ κακίαν πράττεται) καὶ ταῦτα ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι δοκεῖ. εἰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν δὲ ταῦτα, ὧν καὶ τοῦ πραχθῆναι καὶ τοῦ μὴ πραχθῆναι ἡμεῖς εἶναι δοκοῦμεν κύριοι.

66 Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* 180, 4–6; 185, 13–14.

67 Cf. Aristotle, *EN* III.5, 1113b2–1114b25.

68 Cf. Plato, *Prot.* 345d–e. Cf. Lavaud 2007, 180; Horn 2007, 169.

69 Lavaud 2007, 181 observes, with a slight amazement, that Plotinus does not use the distinction between *hêkousion* and *eph'hêmin* in what follows. I suggest that the reason for this seeming inconsistency might be that Plotinus does not support the distinction as part of his theory, but that he has simply advanced the consequences of an opinion he presented. In the remainder of the text, Plotinus does not make use of the distinction between *eph'hêmin* and *hekousion*. He uses notions like *to eleutheron*, *eph'hêmin*, *boule-*

tainly referred to us as 'being in our power'—to what should we assign it?"[70] Plotinus asks to which capacity "in us" the *eph'hêmin* belongs. He reviews some faculties of the soul. He turns first to *hormê* and *orexis*, i.e. actions which result from anger or desire and from the striving for an advantage.[71] To deem such actions as "in our power" one would have to say "that something is in the power of children and beasts and mad persons and those beside themselves and addicted to drugs and those assailed by imaginations of which they are not masters."[72] In considering whether the last are not "master" of the imaginations which oppress them, he uses the same word that played a role in the definition of *eph'hêmin* in the first chapter: *kyrios*. To be "master" of one's own decisions seems to be a central element of the *eph'hêmin*, and this capacity is linked to the rational faculty as the examples of beings lacking reason—temporarily or generally—show.[73]

In the last words of chapter 2 Plotinus concludes that there is nothing "in our power" "in action," where everything is "mixed and cannot have the 'being in our power' in a pure state."[74] Plotinus assumes that "'being in our power' in a pure state" cannot be found in action, since "we" are subject to influences. The withdrawal of the "in our power" from action is certainly a Stoic idea, but Plotinus does not entirely follow their track, since he only speaks of the "in our power" "in a pure state." Plotinus does not limit the *eph'hêmin* as much as the later Stoics.

---

sis, *kyrios*, *autexousion* and *hekousion*, without trying to explain different forms of self-determination. He uses all the different notions available in this context in order to clarify what is truly in our own power. This is a somewhat typical method for Plotinus: he identifies an issue, canvasses earlier philosophical approaches and solutions, and moves on to his own solution—without a scrupulous sorting or rebuttal of the preliminary material. The earlier positions are a prompt to thinking and not necessarily a guide to solutions. He uses for instance the notion *hekousion*, which had be distinguished from *eph'hêmin* in the first chapter, not as distinct from the other notions (Cf. VI 8 [39] 3, 19; 4, 14; 7, 17; 13, 18). This suggests that in the first chapter he is not preparing his own distinctions of the notion *hekousion* from *eph'hêmin*, but that he tries to present a context of discussion, raises issues and expounds problems and incites the reader to think through this preliminary reflection.

70 VI 8 [39] 2, 1–2 (Corrigan/Turner): Ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο ζητητέον· τοῦτο δὴ τὸ ἀναφερόμενον εἰς ἡμᾶς ὡς ἐφ' ἡμῖν ὑπάρχον τίνι δεῖ διδόναι;

71 On these notions cf. Leroux 1990, 245–246; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 155–156.

72 VI 8 [39] 2, 2–8 (Corrigan/Turner): … καὶ παισὶ καὶ θηρίοις τὸ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τι εἶναι δώσομεν καὶ μαινομένοις καὶ ἐξεστηκόσι καὶ φαρμάκοις ἁλοῦσι καὶ ταῖς προσπιπτούσαις φαντασίαις, ὧν οὐ κύριοι·

73 Cf. Leroux 1990, 248–249; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 156–157.

74 VI 8 [39] 2, 35–37 (Corrigan/Turner). Cf. 32–35. Cf. Stamatellos 2015, 141.

The third chapter starts with a résumé of the last ideas, and it still includes the idea of action:

> Having now traced what is in our power back to will, and then situated this in reason and then in correct reason—and perhaps we must add the qualification that 'correct' reason belongs to science, for if someone had correct opinion and acted upon it, he wouldn't equally have the unambiguous power of self-determination if he acted without knowing why he is correct, but was led to what he ought to do by chance or some imagination.[75]

Someone who acts directed by "correct opinion" or "by chance" or "imagination," does not "have the unambiguous power of self-determination" (*autexousion*), since they are not basing their action on reason or, to put it differently, since they are relying on something that is not "in our power." Plotinus articulates this idea in terms of imagination: "Since if we say that imagination is also not in our power, how could we rank those who act in accordance with imagination in the class of self-determining subjects?"[76] This imagination is one that comes from affections of the body.[77] Such imaginations are not "in our power," or, in other words, it is not in "our power" to evoke or hinder them as they come from states of the body. Whoever acts according to these circumstances acts under pressure from some external power and is not autonomous, not *autexousion*.[78] This term is not used by Plato or Aristotle, but, like the notion of the *eph'hêmin*, it can be found at the crossroads of Peripatetic and Stoic traditions, and even more strongly outside of the pagan philosophical tradition in Philo of Alexandria, Clement of Alexandria and Origen and in Gnostic texts.[79] Thus, knowledge is a requirement for "the unambiguous power of self-determination;" and Plotinus allows for "self-determination" in the realm of action, but attributes it only to someone who acts according to reason.

---

75 VI 8 [39] 3, 2–8 (Corrigan/Turner): Ἀναγαγόντες τοίνυν τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἰς βούλησιν, εἶτα ταύτην ἐν λόγῳ θέμενοι, εἶτα ἐν λόγῳ ὀρθῷ—ἴσως δὲ δεῖ προσθεῖναι τῷ ὀρθῷ τὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης· οὐ γάρ, εἴ τις ἐδόξασεν ὀρθῶς καὶ ἔπραξεν, ἔχοι ἂν ἴσως ἀναμφισβήτητον τὸ αὐτεξούσιον, εἰ μὴ εἰδὼς διότι ὀρθῶς, ἀλλὰ τύχῃ ἢ φαντασίᾳ τινὶ πρὸς τὸ δέον ἀχθείς·

76 VI 8 [39] 3, 8–10 (Corrigan/Turner): ἐπεὶ καὶ τὴν φαντασίαν οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι λέγοντες τοὺς κατ' αὐτὴν δρῶντας πῶς ἂν εἰς τὸ αὐτεξούσιον τάξαιμεν;

77 Cf. VI 8 [39] 3, 10–16. The higher form of *phantasia* is not mentioned here; cf. Armstrong 1966–1988, VII, 234–235, note 1; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 177.

78 A synonym of *eph'hêmin* in Stoic texts; cf. Bobzien 1998, 335–336.

79 Cf. Lavaud 2007, 252, note 37 and Corrigan and Turner 2017, 168–173.

> That is also why we will not grant to bad people, who do many things in accordance with these imaginations, either the capacity of having something in their power or voluntary action, but we do grant self-determination to those free of the bodily passions who act through the activities of intellect—tracing what is in our power to a most beautiful originative principle, namely, the activity of intellect, we will also grant that the premises derived from here are truly free, and we shall grant that the desires aroused from thinking are not involuntary.[80]

Only if the actions are based in the intellect and someone is free of the *pathêmata* of the body—an important element in the Stoic tradition as well[81]—, is there autonomy. Whoever is weak or bad[82] and bases his actions on imaginations and other bodily influences has nothing in his power and no voluntary action. Only the orientation towards the intellect guarantees free actions. A true "we" has to orient itself towards the intellect and to separate itself from corporeal influences.

The striving for the good is free, and "freedom of choice, properly understood, means our ability to choose our own goods."[83] Plotinus thus does not favor the idea of a freedom of choice that is the free choice of alternatives, good and bad, but to be truly free means to be able to strive for the good and not be hindered in this endeavor. This freedom truly belongs to the Intellect, since it is not enslaved and hindered by anything. One can only speak of servitude towards one's own nature if one distinguishes between what is a servant and that which it obeys. An entity which does not split up into an actualized and a potential part like Intellect, has to be free, and it suffers no servitude from external forces.[84]

After having developed this understanding of "in our power" and "self-determination" Plotinus asks whether we can ascribe it to the soul that is active according to the intellect.[85] This reintroduces the question of action.[86] "Now

---

80 VI 8 [39] 3, 17–24 (Corrigan/Turner): διὸ καὶ τοῖς φαύλοις κατὰ ταύτας πράττουσι τὰ πολλὰ οὔτε τὸ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς οὔτε τὸ ἑκούσιον δώσομεν, τῷ δὲ διὰ νοῦ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἐλευθέρῳ τῶν παθημάτων τοῦ σώματος τὸ αὐτεξούσιον δώσομεν—εἰς ἀρχὴν τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν καλλίστην ἀνάγοντες τὴν τοῦ νοῦ ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὰς ἐντεῦθεν προτάσεις ἐλευθέρας ὄντως ⟨εἶναι⟩ δώσομεν, καὶ τὰς ὀρέξεις τὰς ἐκ τοῦ νοεῖν ἐγειρομένας οὐκ ἀκουσίους [εἶναι δώσομεν].

81 Cf. Bobzien 1998, 338–339.

82 Bad, *phaulos*, rather to be translated as weak than as evil; cf. Leroux 1990, 260; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 178.

83 Corrigan and Turner 2017, 185.

84 Cf. VI 8 [39] 4, 7–26. The opposition of master and servant can be found in Stoic thought already. Cf. Bobzien 1998, 340.

85 Cf. VI 8 [39] 5, 1–3.

86 Corrigan and Turner 2017, 193.

if we grant this to the soul in its practical action, first we need not grant it to the accomplishment of the action, for we are not masters of the outcome."[87] It is not up to an acting person to reach their goal; external circumstances can undo the best intentions and efforts. This idea can also be found in Stoic thought.[88] We cannot measure the worth of an action by its success, since the outcome of the action is beyond the acting person's control. In this context, "we" either means "we human beings" as Harder translates ("wir Menschen") or "we acting persons." Plotinus then asks: "But if this refers to doing well and doing everything from oneself, perhaps one might rightly claim this. But how is that in our power [...]?"[89] The expressions "from oneself," *ta par' hautou*, and *to eph'hêmin* seem to be synonyms. Everything that has its origin in "oneself" and not in other influence is "in our power." What kind of action is Plotinus talking about? Actions linked to external circumstances are to be excluded; the category includes only thought and the striving for the good. "We" is no longer the acting human being, but the striving soul. For Plotinus says that the activity of courage is not "in our power" if the war in which someone could be brave did not take place.[90] And one should not wish for the occasion to activate this virtue, as it would cause suffering for others (like doctors who would prefer if no one needed their skills). Plotinus' main interest is "with building up his own distinctive Platonic view of human freedom, that we are only truly free when we live on our highest level in the realm of Intellect."[91] However, the outward activity is not neglected either, since it is an outflow or an image of the inner activity which is truly virtuous.[92] The good then has the highest form of freedom, and on it is based any possibility of "what is in our power."[93]

Plotinus has now established that only the orientation towards the good makes the soul or "us" free. Only this turn is free from the influences of the body, affections, or emotions. Obstacles to our will in actions lie outside of what is

87 VI 8 [39] 5, 3–5 (Corrigan/Turner): Τὸ μὲν οὖν πραττούσῃ εἴπερ δώσομεν, πρῶτον μὲν οὐ πρὸς τὴν τεῦξιν ἴσως χρὴ διδόναι· οὐ γὰρ ἡμεῖς τοῦ τυχεῖν κύριοι.

88 Cf. Inwood 1986; Leroux 1990, 271–272; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 195.

89 VI 8 [39] 5, 6–8 (Corrigan/Turner): Εἰ δὲ πρὸς τὸ καλῶς καὶ τὸ πάντα ποιῆσαι τὰ παρ' αὑτοῦ, τάχα μὲν ἂν τοῦτο ὀρθῶς λέγοιτο. Ἐκεῖνο δὲ πῶς ἐφ' ἡμῖν;

90 Cf. VI 8 [39] 5, 8–10. *Eph'hêmin* (9). Cf. Emilsson 2012, 351–352 who points out that the restriction runs both ways: if the war is not there, there is no occasion to be brave; but if an occasion arises, one has to be brave.

91 Armstrong 1966–1988, VII, 228–229, note 1.

92 Emilsson 2012 who discusses the meaning and the Platonic background of the quotation; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 193–197.

93 Cf. VI 8 [39] 7, 1–22. *Eph'hêmin* (18, 23). Plotinus speaks of a will which has strength and power to decide, whose unimpeded effect is what is completely in "our power" (Cf. VI 8 [39] 6, 26–31).

"in our power." On this understanding of what is *eph'hêmin*, "up to us," the "us" refers to those who are separating themselves from the body and its affections and aspiring to be truly free. Plotinus comes back to this idea after some chapters which deal with the Good:

> So one must reply to these issues that each of us is far from substantial being in respect of the body, but in respect of the soul and what we most are, we participate in substantial being and are a particular substantial being, and this is, a compound, as it were, of difference and substantial being.[94]

Hekastos hêmôn, "each of us," that is every single human being has part in being, *ousia*, insofar as she or he is soul. But human beings—"we"—are not just soul, they do not belong just to the higher realm. "Difference" is mixed into being.

> So we are neither substantial being in the strict sense nor substantial being just in itself, and so we are not masters of our own substantial being. For somehow substantial being is one thing and we another, and we are not masters of our own substantial being; rather substantial being itself is master of us, since it is this also that adds the difference.[95]

As "we" are not identical to the *ousia*, we cannot be named, as Plotinus says twice, "masters of our own substantial being." We are not *kyrioi* of the *ousia*, but this does not exclude us from being in our own power: "But since in some respect we are what has mastery of us, to that extent even here below we can be said no less to be masters of ourselves."[96] "We" are at the same time that which is governed and that which governs. The notion "master of ourselves" shows that there are different tendencies in "us," and different parts can gain power, but that the reign of the higher part is right and adequate. However, this does not mean that opposing tendencies are excluded from the "we" and

94 VI 8 [39] 12, 4–7 (Corrigan/Turner): ὡς ἕκαστος μὲν ἡμῶν κατὰ μὲν τὸ σῶμα πόρρω ἂν εἴη οὐσίας, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ὃ μάλιστά ἐσμεν μετέχομεν οὐσίας καί ἐσμέν τις οὐσία, τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν οἷον σύνθετόν τι ἐκ διαφορᾶς καὶ οὐσίας.

95 VI 8 [39] 12, 8–11 (Corrigan/Turner): Οὔκουν κυρίως οὐσία οὐδ' αὐτοουσία· διὸ οὐδὲ κύριοι τῆς αὑτῶν οὐσίας. Ἄλλο γάρ πως ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἡμεῖς ἄλλο, καὶ κύριοι οὐχ ἡμεῖς τῆς αὑτῶν οὐσίας, ἀλλ' ἡ οὐσία αὐτὸ ἡμῶν, εἴπερ αὕτη καὶ τὴν διαφορὰν προστίθησιν. On this passage and its interpretation cf. Leroux 1990, 324–325; Corrigan and Turner 2017, 271–277.

96 VI 8 [39] 12, 11–13 (Corrigan/Turner): Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ὅπερ κύριον ἡμῶν ἡμεῖς πώς ἐσμεν, οὕτω τοι οὐδὲν ἧττον καὶ ἐνταῦθα λεγοίμεθα ἂν αὑτῶν κύριοι.

seen as something external to it; they are part of "us." Some things belonging to "us" are subject to chance.[97] In the ascent, however, "we" separate "us" from the influence of chance, and "we" gain freedom and self-determination.[98] "We" are a complex and dynamic entity, including higher and lower elements, and lower or higher elements can gain dominance. "We" have to be aware of this, of the possibility of ascent and of the danger of a fall. But "we" are an ethical agent, and "we" should strive to be "masters of ourselves."

3 We, the Sage

Treatise I 4 [46] *On happiness*[99] reflects on "us" as human beings, on the sage as the highest possible level human beings should aim for and on the possibility of "our" ascent.

However, the treatise does not start by a discussion of human beings as one might expect given its topic, but with other living beings. This strategy can be seen as an attempt to define the place human beings have. They share features with other living beings, and it is certainly possible for human beings to live in a way that assimilates them to these other forms of life. But human beings can and should, as the remainder of the treatise will show, raise above the level of other beings and live the life of intellect.

Thus, after discussing other living beings and their share in happiness or well-being[100] and the relevance of sense-perception, pleasure, life and reasonable life for happiness, Plotinus turns to human beings:

---

97 Cf. VI 8 [39] 15, 15–17.

98 Cf. VI 8 [39] 15, 21–26.

99 On this treatise cf. Bonazzi 2016. On the *spoudaios* cf. especially Schniewind 2003.

100 If one identifies the "good life" (*to eu zên*) with "happiness" (*to eudaimonein*), then beings other than humans have to participate in happiness. For whether one placed the "well-being" (*euzôia*) "in the comfort" (*eupatheia*) or in the "accomplishment of one's own world," both can be found in other living beings as well. And if one sets happiness as the "end" (*telos*), they participate in this too (cf. I 4 [46] 1, 4–15; my translation). Plotinus addresses Aristotle (cf. Armstrong 1966–1988, I, 173note3). Plotinus does not show here which definition he favors; he just wants to show that there is no reason to exclude other beings from happiness. He says, against those who do not want to ascribe happiness to animals or even plants, that it is "absurd" to deny it to them just because they seem of low worth (I 4 [46] 1, 15–21; my translation). Plotinus rejects contempt for non-human life; it is not right to consider the lower forms of life as worthless and exclude them from the realm of good life. One might, he thinks, deny good life to the plants as they do not have sense-perception, but one might even attribute it to them (cf. I 4 [46] 1, 21–30).

> What I mean is this; it is obvious from what has been said elsewhere that a human being has perfect life by having not only sense-life but reasoning and true intelligence.[101]

Human beings always possess these capacities, but they are only happy when they are actually one with them.[102] The activation of reason and furthermore of intellect brings human beings to what they should be and thus also to happiness. If human beings lead such self-sufficient lives, no external force can darken their happiness; they do not strive for anything as they possess everything they need to be happy.

Since, however, even the sage (*spoudaios*) is a human being while he lives in the sensible realm, he has to take care of his body, but he performs this task in a very special way:

> What he [i.e. the *spoudaois*] seeks he seeks as a necessity, not for himself but for something that belongs to him; that is, he seeks it for the body which is joined to him; and even granting that this is a living body, it lives its own life and not the life which is that of the good man.[103]

Even though the body is connected to him this self-sufficient happy man, the *spoudaios*, is clearly set apart from his body. The body is something that belongs to him and of which he has to take care, but which is not *he himself*. This man is not the psychophysical being, but the true inner human being, the soul. External circumstances and even the death of friends and family may cause him grief, but "it does not grieve him (*auton*) but only that in him which has no intelligence, and he will not allow the distresses of this to move him."[104] "He himself" (*autos*) is defined as what has reason and is distinguished from that "in him" (*en autôi*) which does not have reason, i.e. from the lower functions of the soul. The *spoudaios* is identical to his soul, and his bodily nature is not part of his nature/essence.[105] Pains can therefore not hinder his happiness; he would "bear them as long as he can," and if they are too strong he would die.

---

101 I 4 [46] 4, 6–8 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Λέγω δὲ ὧδε· ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἔχει τελείαν ζωὴν ἄνθρωπος οὐ τὴν αἰσθητικὴν μόνον ἔχων, ἀλλὰ καὶ λογισμὸν καὶ νοῦν ἀληθινόν, δῆλον καὶ ἐξ ἄλλων.

102 Cf. I 4 [46] 4, 8–17.

103 I 4 [46] 4, 25–28 (Armstrong): Ἀλλ' ὃ ζητεῖ ὡς ἀναγκαῖον ζητεῖ, καὶ οὐχ αὑτῷ, ἀλλά τινι τῶν αὑτοῦ. Σώματι γὰρ προσηρτημένῳ ζητεῖ· κἂν ζῶντι δὲ σώματι, τὰ αὐτοῦ ζῶντι τούτῳ, οὐχ ἃ τοιούτου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐστί.

104 I 4 [46] 4, 35–36 (Armstrong): οὐκ αὐτόν, τὸ δ' ἐν αὐτῷ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, οὗ τὰς λύπας οὐ δέξεται.

105 Cf. I 4 [46] 5, 9–11. On the *spoudaios* cf. Schniewind 2003, 137–170; Laurent 2006.

There is no need to pity him, "his light within is like the light in a lantern when it is blowing hard outside with a great fury of wind and storm."[106]

Plotinus is clearly aware of the fact than many people might not be able to grasp this severe vision of the sage: "One must understand that things do not look to the good man as they look to others; none of his experiences penetrate to the inner center, griefs no more than any of the others."[107] The sage differs from other human beings in that he can turn his inner perception and his mirror of the imaginations away from perceptions and affections towards thought, and then he is free of passion and impassible to pain. And the pain and misery of others does not affect him either as Plotinus had already pointed out,[108] but he gets back to this issue now as if he thinks that the question needs to be treated a second time:

> And when the pains concern others? [To sympathise with them] would be a weakness in our soul. There is evidence for this in the fact that we think it something gained if we do not know about other people's sufferings, and even regard it as a good thing if we die first, not considering it from their point of view but from our own, trying to avoid being grieved. This is just our weakness, which we must get rid of and not leave it there and then be afraid of its coming over us.[109]

Plotinus rejects the idea that it is "our nature"[110] to suffer with other human beings.[111] When he speaks of the "our weakness" and says that "we" would prefer this would happen after "our death," then "we" does not refer to the wise because the noble and wise man would not show such a weakness.

> If anyone says that it is our nature to feel pain at the misfortunes of our own people, he should know that this does not apply to everybody, and that it is the business of virtue to raise ordinary nature to a higher level, something better than most people are capable of; and it is better not

106 I 4 [46] 8, 1–5 (Armstrong).

107 I 4 [46] 8, 9–12 (Armstrong): Χρὴ δὲ εἰδέναι, ὡς οὐχ, οἷα τοῖς ἄλλοις φαίνεται, τοιαῦτα καὶ τῷ σπουδαίῳ φανεῖται ἕκαστα, καὶ οὐ μέχρι τοῦ εἴσω ἕκαστα οὔτε τὰ ἄλλα, οὔτε ἀλγεινὰ οὔτε τὰ λυπηρά.

108 Cf. I 4 [46] 7.

109 I 4 [46] 8, 12–18 (Armstrong): Καὶ ὅταν περὶ ἄλλους τὰ ἀλγεινά; ἀσθένεια γὰρ εἴη ψυχῆς ἡμετέρας. Καὶ τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ, ὅταν λανθάνειν ἡμᾶς κέρδος ἡγώμεθα καὶ ἀποθανόντων ἡμῶν, εἰ γίγνοιτο, κέρδος εἶναι τιθεμένων καὶ οὐ τὸ ἐκείνων ἔτι σκοπουμένων, ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτῶν, ὅπως μὴ λυποίμεθα. Τοῦτο δὲ ἡμετέρα ἤδη ἀσθένεια, ἣν δεῖ περιαιρεῖν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐῶντας φοβεῖσθαι μὴ γένηται.

110 I 4 [46] 8, 19 (Armstrong): ἡμᾶς πεφυκέναι.

111 Cf. Kalligas 2014, 179.

> to give in to what ordinary nature normally finds terrible. One must not behave like someone untrained, but stand up to the blows of fortune like a great trained fighter, and know that, though some natures may not like them, one's own can bear them, not as terrors but as children's bogeys.[112]

In these passages, the notion "we" designates mostly those who are trying to raise themselves beyond the normal human level. The endpoint of this development is the *spoudaios*, who is detached from the usual concerns in this world, because he is firmly grounded in a higher intelligible realm. From his detached view-point, none of the suffering in this world is of significance.[113]

This answers the question of pains, suffering and grief. Is it, however, one thing to assume that the *spoudaios*'s happiness does not depend on external circumstances and is not reduced by pain nor sickness, but it is less clear how to explain that his happiness is not even diminished by loss of consciousness: "And suppose the good man is not even conscious?"[114] Plotinus discusses this central issue in chapter 9.

> But suppose he is unconscious, his mind swamped by sickness or magic arts? If they maintain that he is a good man when he is in this state, only fallen into a sort of sleep, what prevents him from being well off?[115]

The lack of consciousness is compared to sleep.[116] Plotinus claims that a noble man would not lose his happiness when he loses his consciousness since sleep does not take it away either. This seems a difficult idea. Plotinus offers the objection that one might call such a man still "good," but not "happy" as "he is not conscious of it or engaged in virtuous activity."[117] This objection seems to make

---

112 I 4 [46] 8, 18–27 (Armstrong): Εἰ δέ τις λέγοι οὕτως ἡμᾶς πεφυκέναι, ὥστε ἀλγεῖν ἐπὶ ταῖς τῶν οἰκείων συμφοραῖς, γιγνωσκέτω, ὅτι οὐ πάντες οὕτω, καὶ ὅτι τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸ κοινὸν τῆς φύσεως πρὸς τὸ ἄμεινον ἄγειν καὶ πρὸς τὸ κάλλιον παρὰ τοὺς πολλούς· κάλλιον δὲ τὸ μὴ ἐνδιδόναι τοῖς νομιζομένοις τῇ κοινῇ φύσει δεινοῖς εἶναι. Οὐ γὰρ ἰδιωτικῶς δεῖ, ἀλλ' οἷον ἀθλητὴν μέγαν διακεῖσθαι τὰς τῆς τύχης πληγὰς ἀμυνόμενον, γινώσκοντα μὲν ὅτι τινὶ φύσει ταῦτα οὐκ ἀρεστά, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ φύσει οἰστά, οὐχ ὡς δεινά, ἀλλ' ὡς παισὶ φοβερά.

113 It is not surprising that such statements have led to the belief that Plotinus' sage stands beyond the norms of usual social behavior. Cf. for instance Dillon 1996. However, other passages also show a more sympathetic picture of the sage (cf. Smith 1999; Schniewind 2000; Remes 2006).

114 I 4 [46] 5, 2 (Armstrong): Εἰ δὲ δὴ μηδ' ἑαυτῷ παρακολουθοῖ;

115 I 4 [46] 9, 1–4 (Armstrong): Ἀλλ' ὅταν μὴ παρακολουθῇ βαπτισθεὶς ἢ νόσοις ἢ μάγων τέχναις; Ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν φυλάξουσιν αὐτὸν σπουδαῖον εἶναι οὕτως ἔχοντα καὶ οἷα ἐν ὕπνῳ κοιμώμενον, τί κωλύει εὐδαίμονα αὐτὸν εἶναι;

116 Cf. Bonazzi 2016, 53–54n69.

117 I 4 [46] 9, 10–11 (Armstrong): Ἀλλ' ἔστω σπουδαῖος, φασί· μὴ αἰσθανόμενος μηδ' ἐνεργῶν κατ' ἀρετήν, πῶς ἂν εὐδαίμων εἴη;

sense. One could still call a good and noble person who is no longer aware of her- or himself good and noble, but few would call her or him happy. This common idea is, however, in opposition to Plotinus' theory. A healthy person is healthy whether she or he perceives it or not, and the same is true for the beautiful: "So if he does not know that he is wise, will he be any the less wise?"[118] An obvious objection says "that wisdom requires awareness and consciousness of its presence" and that "it is in actual and active wisdom that well-being is to be found."[119] But Plotinus rejects this objection by saying:

> if wisdom essentially consists in a substance, or rather in the substance, and this substance does not cease to exist in someone who is asleep or what is called unconscious; if the real activity of the substance goes on in him, and this activity is unsleeping; then the good man, in that he is a good man, will be active even then. It will not be the whole of him that is unaware of this activity, but only a part of him.[120]

The activity of wisdom is a substance and an activity, which will go on, even if the human being is not aware of it. The awareness is secondary and not necessary for the activity itself to go on.[121] Plotinus tries to explain how this is possible by saying that "when our growth-activity is active no perception of it reaches the rest of the human being."[122] In other words, there can be activities in us which are unconscious, but these faculties are none the less active. This idea is supposed to be applied not only to the lower ranking growth principle, but also to higher activities. In this case the whole human being would not be aware of a higher activity which is nonetheless ongoing. "We" is raised to the level of the intellect:

> Actually, however, we are not it [i.e. the growth principle], but we are the activity of the intellect; so that when that is active, we are active.[123]

---

118 I 4 [46] 9, 13–14 (Armstrong): εἰ δὲ ὅτι σοφὸς μὴ αἰσθάνοιτο, ἧττον σοφὸς ἂν εἴη;

119 I 4 [46] 9, 14–17 (Armstrong).

120 I 4 [46] 9, 18–25 (Armstrong): εἰ δ' ἡ τῆς σοφίας ὑπόστασις ἐν οὐσίᾳ τινί, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ, οὐκ ἀπόλωλε δὲ αὕτη ἡ οὐσία ἔν τε τῷ κοιμωμένῳ καὶ ὅλως ἐν τῷ λεγομένῳ μὴ παρακολουθεῖν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ ἔστιν ἡ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτὴ ἐνέργεια ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη ἄυπνος ἐνέργεια, ἐνεργοῖ μὲν ἂν καὶ τότε ὁ σπουδαῖος ᾗ τοιοῦτος· λανθάνοι δ' ἂν αὕτη ἡ ἐνέργεια οὐκ αὐτὸν πάντα, ἀλλά τι μέρος αὐτοῦ·

121 Cf. I 4 [46] 10, 5–6 (Armstrong): "There must be an activity prior to awareness if 'thinking and being are the same.'"

122 I 4 [46] 9, 25–27 (Armstrong, slightly revised).

123 I 4 [46] 9, 28–30 (Armstrong): νῦν δὲ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἐσμέν, ἡ δὲ τοῦ νοοῦντος ἐνέργεια· ὥστε ἐνεργοῦντος ἐκείνου ἐνεργοῖμεν ἂν ἡμεῖς.

"We" can direct our focus to higher and lower levels, and when this happens other areas of what belongs to us might not be visible. The sage who focuses on the level of the intellect and thus becomes intellect, and the lower levels are not in focus—especially not sense-perceptions and passions and the body. Here, however, Plotinus makes the point that the shift of focus is so substantial that it does not matter whether the whole human being is conscious or not. The "we" in this passage is beyond rational thought whereas "we" are defined as rational beings in V 3 [49].[124] Here "we" refers only to those who activate intellective thought, i. e. the *spoudaioi* or in other words souls which have already advanced beyond the level of discursive thought and are operating on the level of intellect. Plotinus assumes that the activity of the higher soul alone is sufficient for *eudaimonia*, and that is of no consequence whether the whole soul is conscious of this activity. The higher soul is impervious to destructions, loss of consciousness, magic or other disturbances; it will continue its higher activity, no matter what happens to lower parts of the soul. Conscious awareness takes place on the level of our rational soul with the help of imagination and not on the level of intellect. Thus thought before consciousness is ranked higher than the conscious awareness of this perpetual thought. It is thus possible to be involved in intellection with and without awareness as Plotinus explains more in detail:

> It seems as if awareness exists and is produced when intellectual activity is reflexive and when that in the life of the soul which is active in thinking is in a way projected back, as happens with a mirror-reflection when there is a smooth, bright, untroubled surface.[125]

The expression "life of the soul" refers to the imagination which Plotinus often compares to a mirror.[126] If the mirror of imagination works, it reflects "the images of thought and intellect" and "we see them and know them in a way parallel to sense-perception, along with the prior knowledge that it is intellect and thought that are active."[127]

> But when this is broken because the harmony of the body is upset, thought and intellect operate without an image, and then intellectual

124 Cf. V 3 [49] 3, 32–36. Cf. p. 73.

125 I 4 [46] 10, 6–10 (Armstrong): καὶ ἔοικεν ἡ ἀντίληψις εἶναι καὶ γίνεσθαι ἀνακάμπτοντος τοῦ νοήματος καὶ τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος τοῦ κατὰ τὸ ζῆν τῆς ψυχῆς οἷον ἀπωσθέντος πάλιν, ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ περὶ τὸ λεῖον καὶ λαμπρὸν ἡσυχάζον.

126 Cf. IV 3 [27] 30, 5–11. On imagination cf. p. 4, note 18.

127 I 4 [46] 10, 10–16 (Armstrong).

> activity takes place without a mind-picture. So one might come to this sort of conclusion, that intellectual activity is [normally] accompanied by a mind-picture but is not a mind-picture.[128]

This idea of thought which is not accompanied by imaginations and therefore unconscious, that is of a thought which is higher than conscious thought is difficult to understand. Aristotle assumes, for instance, that the soul never thinks without images.[129] Plotinus, however, tries to prove by a comparison that such a thought is not only possible, but also of higher worth:

> One can find a great many valuable activities, theoretical and practical, which we carry on both in our contemplative and active life even when we are fully conscious, which do not make us aware of them.[130]

One example Plotinus gives is the reader who is not aware of her reading, especially when she reads with great attention; the other example is the brave man who is not aware of his braveness. In these examples consciousness is not only not helpful, it rather distracts as it darkens the intensity of the actions.[131]

Plotinus wants to apply these ideas to the activity of the sage who does not only not lose anything through his loss of consciousness, but who gains something as his life is not emptied out into consciousness.[132] The sage who is after all just soul[133] is not affected by external goods or suffering. This surprises everyone else, and therefore Plotinus comes back to "our" view of the sage:

> But we bring our own weakness into it when we are considering whether a man is well off, and regard things as frightening and terrible which the man in a state of well-being would not so regard.[134]

There seems to be a gap between the sage and "us," the so-to-speak normal people who have not acquired such transcendent equanimity. The transition is

128 I 4 [46] 10, 17–21 (Armstrong).
129 Cf. Aristotle, *De an.* III, 7, 431a16–17. Aristotle, *De mem.* 449b31–450a1. Cf. Gritti 2005, 268.
130 I 4 [46] 10, 21–24 (Armstrong): Πολλὰς δ' ἄν τις εὕροι καὶ ἐγρηγορότων καλὰς ἐνεργείας καὶ θεωρίας καὶ πράξεις, ὅτε θεωροῦμεν καὶ ὅτε πράττομεν, τὸ παρακολουθεῖν ἡμᾶς αὐταῖς οὐκ ἐχούσας.
131 Cf. I 4 [46] 10, 24–31.
132 Cf. I 4 [46] 10, 31–33.
133 Cf. I 4 [46] 14, 1–4.
134 I 4 [46] 15, 9–11 (Armstrong): Ἀλλὰ γὰρ θεωροῦμεν τὸν εὐδαίμονα μετὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀσθενείας φρικτὰ καὶ δεινὰ νομίζοντες, ἃ μὴ ἂν ὁ εὐδαίμων νομίσειεν·

possible, nonetheless, as shown by the example of someone who has advanced far on this way, but is sometimes haunted by fear:

> the wise man [in him] will come and drive it away and quiet the child in him which is stirred to a sort of distress, by threatening or reasoning; the threatening will be unemotional, as if the child was shocked into quietness just by a severe look.[135]

The image of the "child in him" has its origin in Plato's *Phaedo*. Simmias and Cebes ask Socrates to work through the topic of the immortality of the soul again as there is something in them, the "child in us," which resists and needs further persuasion. It is, in other words, an image for non-rational parts of the soul.[136] Plotinus's addition to the picture is "the wise man [in him]," i.e. the higher part which knows how to quiet the fearful part, the "child in him," not by force, but merely by a simple look, a threat or reasoning. The person who is capable of doing this has advanced far on the way to impassibility and does not need force to subdue the lower part of the soul, and he or she is in no way in danger of being overcome by these lower parts. The truly noble is not affected by such tribulations and does not lead a mixed, but a simple life.[137]

But even the sage has to take care of his body as long as he is linked to it, and he has to give to it what it needs. Plotinus compares him to the player of a lyre who takes care of his instrument as long as he can play it, who replaces it by another instrument and who gives up this instrument to play music without an instrument, and who therefore did not play this instrument in vain.[138] This image of the reincarnation of the soul and the final separation from the body presents the state of the soul in the body as a lower, but important and necessary stage. It is not a punishment, but a preparation and a good and adequate activity the soul performs while in the body, an activity that prepares the soul for its life without the body.

In this treatise, "we" can refer to those who are only at the beginning of their ascent and to those who are striving to reach the level of the sage and to those who have reached it. The fact that this term can refer to all these levels underlines that no one's status is fixed and that there is the option to ascend (but also

135 I 4 [46] 15, 18–21 (Armstrong): προσελθὼν ὁ σοφὸς ἀπώσεται καὶ τὸν ἐν αὐτῷ κινηθέντα οἷον πρὸς λύπας παῖδα καταπαύσει ἢ ἀπειλῇ ἢ λόγῳ· ἀπειλῇ δὲ ἀπαθεῖ, οἷον εἰ ἐμβλέψαντος σεμνὸν μόνον παῖς ἐκπλαγείη.

136 Cf. Plato, *Phd.* 77e. Cf. Erler 2004, 63–68; Erler 2005, 89–92.

137 Cf. I 4 [46] 16, 4–5.

138 Cf. I 4 [46] 16, 17–29. Cf. Bonazzi 2016, 81n112.

the possibility to fall). Thus, first of all, "we" often refers to those human beings who have not reached the status of the sage and who can therefore only see and judge the sage's state from the outside and so misjudge it because of their own weakness. This "we" is the starting point for an ascent, and Plotinus uses this kind of "we" to encourage his students to strive for such a state of perfection as the sage possesses it. Plotinus also uses "we" to refer to those who are on their way to perfection and finally to those who have reached it. In this last sense the "we" is identical to the intellect. Plotinus thus underlines both the difference between the sage and other human beings and the continuity, i.e. the option for change. All human beings have an undescended soul, but most of them are not aware of it since they have never turned their center of consciousness to this higher level. The sage, however, has accomplished the shift of the "we" to the level of the intellect. The sage has become intellect.[139]

139 Cf. Beierwaltes 1985, 132: "Trotz der Behauptung Plotinus über Sein und Struktur des menschlichen Denkens: daß wir *an sich* nicht Geist sind, ist im Aspekt des Weges aus dem Vielen zum Einen hin dennoch zu fragen, ob nicht die radikale Veränderung des *Bewußtseins* eine Veränderung des *Seins* selbst und im ganzen impliziere, so daß wir nicht nur *wissen*, daß der Geist Grund unseres Denkens ist, sondern daß wir im Bewußt-Werden des Unbewußten und in der Tendenz auf ein immer intensiveres Eins-Werden hin uns selbst in Geist aufheben, selbst Geist *werden*."

CHAPTER 4

The Location of the We

According to the treatises discussed in chapter II "we" can refer to the living being or human being, but it can also denote the soul. Chapter III focused on the ethical aspect, i.e. the "we" as the ethical subject, as the entity which is or should be in charge. Chapter IV addresses a related, but nonetheless new issue: the "we" can have a location, it can be located and furthermore locate itself on various levels, on the level of sense-perception, rationality, Intellect or even the One. This issue clearly connects the different usages addressed in chapter II with the ethical implications of chapter III, and it prepares the discussion of consciousness in chapter V.

1 The One and "We"

Treatise VI 9 [9] *On the Good or the One* discusses "our" relation to the One, the highest origin of everything.[1] The main topics of this treatise are the One, the connection of the soul to the One, the union with the One[2] and "our" ways of speaking about the One and about the union. Since the One is beyond our grasp, since it is ineffable and unthinkable, we speak, Plotinus writes, not about the One, but about ourselves as we are trying to get closer to the One:

> For to say that it is the cause is not to predicate something incidental of it but of us, because we have something from it while that One is in itself; but one who speaks precisely would not say 'that' or 'is'; but we run round

1 On this treatise cf. Meijer 1992; Hadot 1994; Clark 2020.

2 On the topic of mystical union cf. Trouillard 1961 [= Trouillard 2014, 163–174]; Rist 1967b, 213–230; O'Daly 1973, 82–94; Trouillard 1974; Hadot 1980; Beierwaltes 1985, 123–154; Beierwaltes 1987; Hadot 1988, 57–67; Bussanich 1994; Bussanich 1997; Trouillard 2014; Meijer 1992, 294–325; Beierwaltes 2006; Stock 2024b (forthcoming). There is a discussion whether the union is "theistic" (Rist 1967b, 213–230; Blumenthal 1969, 326; Rist 1989; Bertozzi 2021, 308–318) or "monistic" (Mamo 1976) (cf. on the debate Bertozzi 2021, 308–318; Trouillard 1961, 436–438); Trouillard 1974, 7–8 rejects a "pantheistic" form of union; Arp 2004 argues for a "mediated union." Other authors argue against applying terms like monistic or theistic (cf. Beierwaltes 1974, 9; Blumenthal 1987, 553; Bussanich 1994, 5326–5328; Bussanich 1997, 364–365).

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_006

> it outside, in a way, and want to explain our own experiences of it, sometimes near it and sometimes falling away in our perplexities about it.[3]

The term "we" clearly oscillates between "we" as human beings, i.e. "we" who are using language to speak about the One or rather about ourselves, and the souls which aspire for union, but have not reached it. This double meaning of the word "we" turns, however, into the question or our location:

> But now, since a part of us is held by the body, as if someone had his feet in water, but the rest of his body was above it, we lift ourselves up by the part which is not submerged in the body and by this join ourselves at our own centres to something like the centre of all things, just as the centres of the greatest circles join the centre of the encompassing sphere, and we are at rest.[4]

The main thesis in these lines is: A "part of us (*meros hêmon*)" is taken up by the body. Plotinus uses two images to explain this situation: The first presents a person who stands in water and whose legs are covered by water. The water signifies the body, which covers one part of the soul or one part of "us." Another part of "us" sticks out. The lower part, which is covered by the body, contains the functions of the soul that are close to the body, i.e. the growth principle and emotions. With its rational part and with the part which does not descend, the souls towers over the body. The second image uses geometry. "Our" center, i.e. the highest part of "our soul" is based in the center of all things, in the One, as centers of circles in the center of a globe. In these images "we" seems to signify the soul in all its functions, and not just the higher rational part. But Plotinus' main interest is not the soul in its diverse functions, but its link to the One. And he again speaks of "us" and "we":

> That One, therefore, since it has no otherness is always present, and we are present to it when we have no otherness; and the One does not desire us, so as to be around us, but we desire it, so that we are around

3 VI 9 [9] 3, 49–54 (Armstrong): Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ αἴτιον λέγειν οὐ κατηγορεῖν ἐστι συμβεβηκός τι αὐτῷ, ἀλλ' ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἔχομέν τι παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου ὄντος ἐν αὑτῷ· δεῖ δὲ μηδὲ τὸ ⟨ἐκείνου⟩ μηδὲ ⟨ὄντος⟩ λέγειν ἀκριβῶς λέγοντα, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς οἷον ἔξωθεν περιθέοντας τὰ αὑτῶν ἑρμηνεύειν ἐθέλειν πάθη ὁτὲ μὲν ἐγγύς, ὁτὲ δὲ ἀποπίπτοντας ταῖς περὶ αὐτὸ ἀπορίαις.

4 VI 9 [9] 8, 16–22 (Armstrong): Νῦν δέ, ἐπεὶ μέρος ἡμῶν κατέχεται ὑπὸ τοῦ σώματος, οἷον εἴ τις τοὺς πόδας ἔχοι ἐν ὕδατι, τῷ δ' ἄλλῳ σώματι ὑπερέχοι, τῷ δὴ μὴ βαπτισθέντι τῷ σώματι ὑπεράραντες, τούτῳ συνάπτομεν κατὰ τὸ ἑαυτῶν κέντρον τῷ οἷον πάντων κέντρῳ, καθάπερ τῶν μεγίστων κύκλων τὰ κέντρα τῷ τῆς σφαίρας τῆς περιεχούσης κέντρῳ, ἀναπαυόμενοι.

> it. And we are always around it but do not always look to it; it is like a choral dance: in the order of its singing the choir keeps round its conductor but may sometimes turn away, so that he is out of their sight, but when it turns back to him it sings beautifully and is truly with him; so we too are always around him—and if we were not, we should be totally dissolved and no longer exist—but not always turned to him; but when we do look to him, then we are at our goal and at rest and do not sing out of tune as we truly dance a god-inspired dance around him.[5]

"We" denotes clearly all the souls, those who turn away from the One and those who aspire for it. The image of the choir shows that all souls are always around the One, since they would lose their being if they were not. However, they will only reach their goal if they turn towards it. The One does not lose or gain anything by the souls' turning away or turning back. It is always present, and it does not need anything while the souls are fickle beings who still have to reach the perfect calm. "And in this dance one sees the spring of life, the spring of intellect, the principle of being, the cause of good, the root of the soul."[6] This sentence does not specify whether the subject is the soul or an unspecific "someone;"[7] the previous sentence had "we" as a subject, not the soul. A little later Plotinus comes back to the first person plural:

> For we are not cut off from him or separate, even if the nature of the body has intruded and drawn us to itself, but we breathe and are preserved because that Good had not given its gifts and then gone away but is always bestowing them as long as it is what it is.[8]

---

5 VI 9 [9] 8, 33–45 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ἐκεῖνο μὲν οὖν μὴ ἔχον ἑτερότητα ἀεὶ πάρεστιν, ἡμεῖς δ' ὅταν μὴ ἔχωμεν· κἀκεῖνο μὲν ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐφίεται, ὥστε περὶ ἡμᾶς εἶναι, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐκείνου, ὥστε ἡμεῖς περὶ ἐκεῖνο. Καὶ ἀεὶ μὲν περὶ αὐτό, οὐκ ἀεὶ δὲ εἰς αὐτὸ βλέπομεν, ἀλλ' οἷον χορὸς ἑξῆς ᾄδων καίπερ ἔχων περὶ τὸν κορυφαῖον τραπείη ἂν εἰς τὸ ἔξω τῆς θέας, ὅταν δὲ ἐπιστρέψῃ, ᾄδει τε καλῶς καὶ ὄντως περὶ αὐτὸν ἔχει, οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀεὶ μὲν περὶ αὐτόν—καὶ ὅταν μή, λύσις ἡμῖν παντελὴς ἔσται καὶ οὐκέτι ἐσόμεθα—οὐκ ἀεὶ δὲ εἰς αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ὅταν εἰς αὐτὸν ἴδωμεν, τότε ἡμῖν τέλος καὶ ἀνάπαυλα καὶ τὸ μὴ ἀπᾴδειν χορεύουσιν ὄντως περὶ αὐτὸν χορείαν ἔνθεον.

6 VI 9 [9] 9, 1–2 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ἐν δὲ ταύτῃ τῇ χορείᾳ καθορᾷ πηγὴν μὲν ζωῆς, πηγὴν δὲ νοῦ, ἀρχὴν ὄντος, ἀγαθοῦ αἰτίαν, ῥίζαν ψυχῆς·

7 As in Tornau's translation.

8 VI 9 [9] 9, 7–11 (Armstrong): Οὐ γὰρ ἀποτετμήμεθα οὐδὲ χωρίς ἐσμεν, εἰ καὶ παρεμπεσοῦσα ἡ σώματος φύσις πρὸς αὑτὴν ἡμᾶς εἵλκυσεν, ἀλλ' ἐμπνέομεν καὶ σῳζόμεθα οὐ δόντος, εἶτ' ἀποστάντος ἐκείνου, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ χορηγοῦντος ἕως ἂν ᾖ ὅπερ ἐστί.

Plotinus describes the position of the "we" between the One and the body, and he is clearly referring to the soul again. "We" (or the soul) are on the one hand not separated from the One whose gift vivifies everything. On the other hand, the bodily nature drags "us," the soul, to it, in order to form a living being, and it draws the soul away from its origin, the One. But this does not cut the soul off; the soul remains connected to its origin, or, in other words, something of it remains in the intelligible realm. The souls here—"we"—can turn more or less towards the One, "we" can live a better or worse life, or, in other words, the life of the earthly or of the heavenly Aphrodite.[9] The goal is to live the life of the heavenly Aphrodite and turn towards the One, and Plotinus has thus some advice for those who do not yet know the pleasure that awaits them in those heights:

> And if anyone does not know this experience, let him think of it in terms of the loves here below, and what it is like to attain what one is most in love with, and that these earthly loves are mortal and harmful and loves only of images, and that they change because it was not what is really and truly loved nor our good nor what we seek. But there is our true love, with whom also we can be united (*suneinai*), having a part in him and truly possessing him, not embracing him in the flesh from outside.[10]

Those who only know earthly love are asked to disdain it as an image and to search for what truly merits love, i.e. "our good" and the goal of "our" striving. The goal of the union, however, is not merely a striving towards the One, but to "be united (*suneinai*)." Therefore, the soul has to turn away from the many things and turn towards the One:

> But quite otherwise, we must put away other things and take our stand only in this, and become this alone, cutting away all other things in which we are encased; so we must be eager to go out from here and be impatient at being bound to the other things, that we may embrace him with

9 Cf. VI 9 [9] 9, 11–38. On the origin of this distinction in Plato (*Symp*. 180d6–e1) and its usage in treatise III 5 [50] 2, 14–19 cf. Kalligas 2014, 512–513; Stock 2024d.

10 VI 9 [9] 9, 38–46 (Armstrong): Καὶ οἷς μὲν ἄγνωστόν ἐστι τὸ πάθημα τοῦτο, ἐντεῦθεν ἐνθυμείσθω ἀπὸ τῶν ἐνταῦθα ἐρώτων, οἷόν ἐστι τυχεῖν ὧν τις μάλιστα ἐρᾷ, καὶ ὅτι ταῦτα μὲν τὰ ἐρώμενα θνητὰ καὶ βλαβερὰ καὶ εἰδώλων ἔρωτες καὶ μεταπίπτει, ὅτι οὐκ ἦν τὸ ὄντως ἐρώμενον οὐδὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἡμῶν οὐδ' ὃ ζητοῦμεν. Ἐκεῖ δὲ τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἐρώμενον, ᾧ ἔστι καὶ συνεῖναι μεταλαβόντα αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄντως ἔχοντα, οὐ περιπτυσσόμενον σαρξὶν ἔξωθεν.

> the whole of ourselves and have no part with which we do not touch god. There one can see him and oneself as it is right to see: oneself glorified, full of intelligible light—but rather itself light—weightless, floating free, having become—but rather being—god.[11]

The union is described as touching god, i.e. the One itself, seeing it, being light and even being god. The usage of *theos* suggests that the soul indeed does not only touch the One, but becomes the One in this ultimate fulfillment of its desire. Plotinus underlines this again in the next chapters:

> So then the seer does not see and does not distinguish and does not imagine two [i.e. himself as different from the One], but it is as if he had become someone else and he is not himself and does not count as his own there, but has come to belong to that and so is one, having joined, as it were, centre to centre.[12]

The passage underlines the unity: It seems impossible to speak of a vision as there is no duality of a seer and the one who is seen, and the union is a transformation of the one who sees into "someone else (*allos*)" and not "himself (*autos*)." However, the way Plotinus phrases these statements adds a bit of ambiguity: he speaks of "not imagining two," and he uses the phrase "as if he had become." The passage does not deliver an undisputable proof that there is a complete loss of self[13] and complete union with the One, but it certainly claims that that is what the one feels who experiences the union. She

---

11 VI 9 [9] 9, 50–58 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Τοὐναντίον δὲ ἀποθέσθαι τὰ ἄλλα δεῖ, καὶ ἐν μόνῳ στῆναι τούτῳ, καὶ τοῦτο γενέσθαι μόνον περικόψαντα τὰ λοιπὰ ὅσα περικείμεθα· ὥστε ἐξελθεῖν σπεύδειν ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἀγανακτεῖν ἐπὶ θάτερα δεδεμένους, ἵνα τῷ ὅλῳ αὐτῶν περιπτυξώμεθα καὶ μηδὲν μέρος ἔχοιμεν, ᾧ μὴ ἐφαπτόμεθα θεοῦ. Ὁρᾶν δὴ ἔστιν ἐνταῦθα κἀκεῖνον καὶ ἑαυτὸν ὡς ὁρᾶν θέμις· ἑαυτὸν μὲν ἠγλαϊσμένον, φωτὸς πλήρη νοητοῦ, μᾶλλον δὲ φῶς αὐτὸ καθαρόν, ἀβαρῆ, κοῦφον, θεὸν γενόμενον, μᾶλλον δὲ ὄντα. Plotinus also speaks of being "possessed by a god, in a quiet solitude and a state of calm" (VI 9 [9] 11, 12–13 [Armstrong]: Ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἁρπασθεὶς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας ἡσυχῇ ἐν ἐρήμῳ). On the idea of a possession by a god cf. V 8 [31] 10, 43–11, 3; V 3 [49] 14, 9; Hadot 1980, 257–258; Hadot 1986, 236–239.

12 VI 9 [9] 10, 14–17 (Armstrong): Τότε μὲν οὖν οὔτε ὁρᾷ οὐδὲ διακρίνει ὁ ὁρῶν οὐδὲ φαντάζεται δύο, ἀλλ' οἷον ἄλλος γενόμενος καὶ οὐκ αὐτὸς οὐδ' αὑτοῦ συντελεῖ ἐκεῖ, κἀκείνου γενόμενος ἕν ἐστιν ὥσπερ κέντρῳ κέντρον συνάψας.

13 Remes reads the union as a "loss of self," "a surrender to a power larger than oneself" (Remes 2008b, 133). Armstrong speaks of an "infinite self" which stretches up to intellect and even to the union with the One (Armstrong 1940, 34–47) and claims that "Our self does not lose its identity even in its ultimate union" (Armstrong 1979a, 59).

or he experiences her- or himself as one with the One[14] and thus does not speak of the One as "another": "For how could one announce that as another when he did not see, there when he had the vision, another, but one with himself?"[15] After the end of the vision, the seer and the One are again seen separate: "This also is how we now speak of 'another'."[16] When "we" are in time, not unified to the One, "we" consider the One to be different from "the seer," but "we" think or feel that "we" are united to it and cease to be ourselves during the union. This union is furthermore famously described as *ekstasis*:

> But that other, perhaps, was not a contemplation but another kind of seeing, a being out of oneself and simplifying and giving oneself over and pressing towards contact and rest.[17]

This is the only time in the *Enneads* in which Plotinus uses the term *ekstasis* as referring to the union, and he combines it with the notion of *haplôsis*, *epidosis* and *stasis*.[18] The *ekstasis* is not a stepping out, but a stepping in,[19] an return to the highest part of ourselves. In other words, the higher "I" which is usually unconscious becomes present and disrupts normal consciousness,[20] but a consciousness of the everyday self may pull the soul out of the union.[21]

Thus, in VI 9 [9], at the beginning, "we" refers to those who philosophize with Plotinus, as embodied beings who are in time and use language. More importantly, however, "we" are those who strive for the union with the One insofar as "we" are souls who want to return to their origin: In the final words of the

---

14 Cf. Beierwaltes 2006, 87: "Der sich mit dem Einen Einende wird oder *ist* das *Eine* selbst als *er* selbst." Cf. VI 9 [9] 10, 15–17; 10, 19–21; 11, 11–12; 11, 38–42; VI 7 [38] 34, 13–14; Dodds 1960, 7; O'Daly 1973, 85; vgl. 82–94; Trouillard 1974, 12; Mamo 1976, 209; Hadot 1980, 257–258; Armstrong 1983, 4; Beierwaltes 1985, 141–145; Beierwaltes 1986, 305; O'Meara 1993, 106.

15 VI 9 [9] 10, 20–21 (Armstrong): πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἀπαγγείλειέ τις ὡς ἕτερον οὐκ ἰδὼν ἐκεῖ ὅτε ἐθεᾶτο ἕτερον, ἀλλὰ ἓν πρὸς ἑαυτόν;

16 VI 9 [9] 10, 18–19 (Armstrong): Οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς νῦν λέγομεν ἕτερον.

17 VI 9 [9] 11, 22–24 (Armstrong): Τὸ δὲ ἴσως ἦν οὐ θέαμα, ἀλλὰ ἄλλος τρόπος τοῦ ἰδεῖν, ἔκστασις καὶ ἅπλωσις καὶ ἐπίδοσις αὑτοῦ καὶ ἔφεσις πρὸς ἁφὴν καὶ στάσις.

18 Cf. Meijer 1992, 280–282; Dodds 1965, 72. On *ekstasis* cf. Beierwaltes 1985, 140–142; Corrigan 1994, bes. 30–31; Beierwaltes 2006, 87; Mazilu 2008, 444–468; on *haplôsis* cf. Aleknienė 2016, chapt. 5.

19 Cf. Trouillard 1961, 433; Trouillard 1974, 5; Dodds 1960, 4.

20 Cf. Hadot 1980, 256; Rist 1967a, 420–422.

21 Hadot 1986, 240.

treatise he famously speaks about the "flight of the alone to the alone."[22] The goal is the union during which "we" do not perceive ourselves as distinct from the One, in which "we" do not conceive ourselves as ourselves, but as "another," as the One.

2 Our Intellect

While treatise VI 9 [9] focuses mainly on our relation to the One, treatise V 3 [49] addresses the "we" and its relation to the intellect.[23] This requires frequent comparisons between the soul and intellect. The soul is "engaged in reasoning,"[24] it has "the task of observing what is outside it and busying itself with it," while "it is proper to Intellect to observe what belongs to itself and what is within itself."[25] However, there is "pure Intellect" in the soul.[26]

> But ought we to go on to say that it belongs to soul? But we shall not say that it belongs to soul, but we shall say that it is our intellect, being different from the reasoning part and having gone up on high, but all the same ours, even if we should not count it among the parts of soul.[27]

Plotinus does not only ask whether the intellect belongs to the soul, but whether it belongs to the "we."[28] Intellect does not belong to the soul, i.e. it is not one of the parts of the soul, but it is "ours," *hêmeteron*, and thus belongs to the *hêmeis* in a certain way which is yet to be determined:

> yes, really, it is ours and not ours; for this reason we use it and do not use it—but we always use discursive reason—and it is ours when we use it, but not ours when we do not use it.[29]

---

22 VI 9 [9] 11, 51 (Armstrong): φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον. For the idea of flight cf. Plato, *Theaet* 176ab. Cf. on the formula *monou pros monon* Peterson 1933; Beierwaltes 1985, 145n62; Corrigan 1996, 38–37, 41–42.

23 On this treatise cf. Beierwaltes 1991; Ham 2000; Horn 2000; Horn 2003.

24 V 3 [49] 3, 14 (Armstrong): ἐν λογισμοῖς εἶναι.

25 V 3 [49] 3, 16–18 (Armstrong): Ἢ ὅτι ἔδομεν αὐτῷ τὰ ἔξω σκοπεῖσθαι καὶ πολυπραγμονεῖν, νῷ δὲ ἀξιοῦμεν ὑπάρχειν τὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ σκοπεῖσθαι.

26 V 3 [49] 3, 21–22 (Armstrong).

27 V 3 [49] 3, 23–26 (Armstrong): ἀλλ' ἔτι δεῖ λέγειν ψυχῆς τοῦτο; Ἀλλ' οὐ ψυχῆς μὲν φήσομεν, ἡμέτερον δὲ νοῦν φήσομεν, ἄλλον μὲν ὄντα τοῦ διανοουμένου καὶ ἐπάνω βεβηκότα, ὅμως δὲ ἡμέτερον, καὶ εἰ μὴ συναριθμοῖμεν τοῖς μέρεσι τῆς ψυχῆς.

28 Cf. Ham 2000, 116.

29 V 3 [49] 3, 26–29 (Armstrong): Ἢ ἡμέτερον καὶ οὐχ ἡμέτερον· διὸ καὶ προσχρώμεθα αὐτῷ καὶ

Rational thought always belongs to "us," it is even part of what defines "us," whereas the relation to the intellect is of a different kind as it depends on "our" turning towards it or away from it, on "our" "using." Hence, Plotinus has to define what he means by the notion "using":

> But what is this 'using'? Is it when we become it and speak like it? No, in accord with it: for we are not Intellect. We are, then, in accord with it by our rational power which first receives it.[30]

The most important sentence in this passage is certainly: *ou gar nous hêmeis*. The intellect may be "ours" or "not ours," but "we" are not intellect, i.e. "we" have a relation to the intellect, but "we" are not intellect. Plotinus explains this with reference to sense-perception:

> For we perceive through perception, even if it is not[31] we who are the perceivers: do we then reason like this, and think through Intellect like this? No, it is we who reason and we make the acts of intelligence in discursive reasoning; for this is what we are.[32]

Plotinus distinguishes rational thought both from sense-perception and intellect. "We" are those who "reason," but we are, strictly speaking, not those who perceive, and "we" are not intellect.[33] Both the activity of sense-perception and that of intellection are in some way available to "us," but our main activity and our center is rational thought.

οὐ προσχρώμεθα—διανοίᾳ δὲ ἀεί—καὶ ἡμέτερον μὲν χρωμένων, οὐ προσχρωμένων δὲ οὐχ ἡμέτερον.

30 V 3 [49] 3, 29–32 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Τὸ δὴ προσχρῆσθαι τί ἐστιν; Ἆρα αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖνο γινομένους, καὶ φθεγγομένους ὡς ἐκεῖνος; Ἢ κατ' ἐκεῖνον· οὐ γὰρ νοῦς ἡμεῖς· κατ' ἐκεῖνο οὖν τῷ λογιστικῷ πρώτῳ δεχομένῳ.

31 Ham does not follow the conjecture *kan* ⟨*mê*⟩ (Igal, HS2) and translates "nous sommes ceux qui sentient" (Ham 2000, 53, note 26; 120–121). Armstrong, Blumenthal and Beierwaltes have *kan* ⟨*mê*⟩ (Blumenthal 1993, 143. Cf. ibid. 147); Harder/Beutler/Theiler also add a negation, as in H.-S.1 καὶ ἡμεῖς ⟨οὐχ⟩ οἱ αἰσθανόμενοι. If one takes a closer look at the argumentation of this passage, the addition of a negation makes sense, as Plotinus distinguishes rational thought both from intellect and from sense-perception.

32 V 3 [49] 3, 32–36 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Καὶ γὰρ αἰσθανόμεθα δι' αἰσθήσεως κἂν ⟨μὴ⟩ ἡμεῖς οἱ αἰσθανόμενοι· ἆρ' οὖν καὶ διανοούμεθα οὕτως καὶ διὰ ⟨νοῦ⟩ νοοῦμεν οὕτως; Ἢ αὐτοὶ μὲν οἱ λογιζόμενοι καὶ νοοῦμεν τὰ ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ νοήματα αὐτοί· τοῦτο γὰρ ἡμεῖς.

33 Cf. a similar remark in III 5 [50] 3, 25–26: "that the best in us men is 'in' us, all the same we give it a separate existence."

> The activities of Intellect are from above in the same way that those of sense-perception are from below; we are this, the principal part of the soul, in the middle between two powers, a worse and a better, the worse that of sense-perception, the better that of Intellect.[34]

"We" is the *kyrion*[35] of the soul, its "principal part," and its activity is rational thought. Sense-perception and intellect are, so to speak, below and above it; they are adjacent activities which are connected, but not the central moment of the "we." Plotinus then advances an objection:

> But it is generally agreed that sense-perception is always ours—for we are always perceiving—but there is disagreement about Intellect, both because we do not always use it and because it is separate; and it is separate because it itself does not incline towards us, but we rather look up towards it.[36]

The intellect is, Plotinus writes, using an Aristotelian term, "separate;"[37] "we" can turn to it, but it will not incline towards "us" while sense-perception seems available to us in a way in which the intellect is not. However, Plotinus' considerations on the *phantasia* suggest that "we" do not always perceive, at least not in the sense of a conscious awareness of the perception: If the mirror of the imagination is filled with higher images, with images of thought, then there is no room for images of sense-perception; then sense-perception does not reach consciousness.[38] The following comparison shows how Plotinus wants to distinguish between sense-perception, rational thought and intellect and how he links these to "us."

> Sense-perception is our messenger, but Intellect is our king. But we too rule like kings, when we are in accord with it; we can be in accord with it

---

34 V 3 [49] 3, 36–39 (Armstrong): Τὰ δὲ τοῦ νοῦ ἐνεργήματα ἄνωθεν οὕτως, ὡς τὰ ἐκ τῆς αἰσθήσεως κάτωθεν, τοῦτο ὄντες τὸ κύριον τῆς ψυχῆς, μέσον δυνάμεως διττῆς, χείρονος καὶ βελτίονος, χείρονος μὲν τῆς αἰσθήσεως, βελτίονος δὲ τοῦ νοῦ.

35 Ham 2000, 53, note 29 refers to Aristotle, *EN* X.7 1178a2 where a *kyrion* is mentioned, and a little earlier (X.7 1177b34) a *kratiston tôn en hautô*(*i*) which we should follow in our life.

36 V 3 [49] 3, 40–43 (Armstrong): Ἀλλ' αἴσθησις μὲν αἰεὶ ἡμέτερον δοκεῖ συγκεχωρημένον—ἀεὶ γὰρ αἰσθανόμεθα—νοῦς δὲ ἀμφισβητεῖται, καὶ ὅτι μὴ αὐτῷ ἀεὶ καὶ ὅτι χωριστός· χωριστὸς δὲ τῷ μὴ προσνεύειν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ἄνω βλέποντας.

37 Cf. Aristotle, *De an.* III, 5, 430a17–18: *nous chôristos*, *apathês* and *amigês*. Cf. also Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De an.* 89, 11–12. Cf. Dillon 2008, 248–249.

38 Cf. above p. 59; 62. On imagination cf. p. 4, note 18.

> in two ways, either by having something like its writing written in us like laws, or by being as if filled with it and able to see it and be aware of it as present.[39]

Plotinus uses images to visualize this hierarchy. Sense-perception is "our" messenger, but the intellect is "our king" or "king over us." This image does not supply any details about Plotinus' theory of sense-perception,[40] but allows us to position the "we" over the sense-perception and below the intellect. Sense-perception is the "messenger" (*angelos*) who informs "us" about things and events in the outside world through the sense-organs. "We" then is the center of perception and is thus linked to the imagination which is responsible for making sense-perceptions conscious and remembering them. "We" is therefore more than just rational thought.[41]

The messenger "sense-perception" is subordinate to "us" and works for "us," but "we" are the king's, that is the intellect's, subjects. Plotinus seems to identify the separate intellect from *De anima* and the king of heaven from the *Philebos*, following, maybe, Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary.[42] However, it is very important that the image is not static; "we" do not just remain subjects of the king, but "we" can ascend to reign with it if "we" act according to it. "We" are not king, there is no identity, but the option of an identification is, as Ham points out, shown by the switch from the substantive to the verb (*basileus … basileuomen*).[43] This recalls the image of the individual souls as vassals of the world-soul who leave this happy life to turn towards the individual bodies.[44] In the present case, however, Plotinus is not interested in the relation of the individual souls to the world-soul, but in their relation to the intellect, and in their ascent, not their descent. Even though Plotinus identifies

---

39 V 3 [49] 3, 44–4, 4 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Αἴσθησις δὲ ἡμῖν ἄγγελος, βασιλεὺς δὲ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐκεῖνος. Βασιλεύομεν δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅταν κατ' ἐκεῖνον·κατ'ἐκεῖνον δὲ διχῶς, ἢ τοῖς οἷον γράμμασιν ὥσπερ νόμοις ἐν ἡμῖν γραφεῖσιν, ἢ οἷον πληρωθέντες αὐτοῦ ἢ καὶ δυνηθέντες ἰδεῖν καὶ αἰσθάνεσθαι παρόντος. Cf. on this passage Blumenthal 1993.

40 On Plotinus' theory of sense-perception cf. Emilsson 1988. On the image of the messenger and Stoic influences cf. Morel 2002; Taormina 2010, 250–252. On the image of sense-perceptions as messengers cf. also Lang 1926, 55–56.

41 Contra Taormina 2010, 261 who determines the "we" as "ragione discorsiva."

42 Cf. Armstrong 1966–1988, V, 80–81, note 2; Beierwaltes 1991, 106, Blumenthal 1993, 148; Ham 2000, 53, note 31; Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, Vb, 374; Taormina 2010, 248–249. Cf. Plato, *Phil.* 28c where the intellect (*nous*) is called the king of heaven. On the metaphor of the king cf. also Dörrie 1970 who, however, does not discuss the present passage.

43 V 3 [49] 3, 45–4, 1. Cf. Ham 2000, 122.

44 Cf. IV 8 [6] 4, 5–28.

the *hêmeis* with the *kyrion* of the soul, his introduction of the dynamic picture of ruling like kings with the king suggests that "we" can ascend to the level of Intellect.[45] Ham rightly observes that Plotinus avoids "static and 'objective' psychology" by using the concept of the "we," i.e. a notion which "suggests the continuity of a subject of experiences and actions in view of the ontological distinctions."[46]

However, in what follows, Plotinus also uses a more objective description of the soul and its ascent when he speaks about the double nature of the human being who knows her- or himself:

> so that the human being who knows himself is double, one knowing the nature of reasoning which belongs to soul, and one up above this human being, who knows himself according to Intellect because he has become that Intellect; and by that Intellect he thinks himself again, not any longer as a human being, but having become altogether other and snatching himself up into the higher world, drawing up only the better part of the soul, which alone is able to be winged for intellection, with which someone there keeps by him what he sees.[47]

The human being involved in self-knowledge on the level of reason is a human being, but the one who has "become that Intellect" "thinks no longer as a human being" and has become "other." The distinction between these two human beings is, however, not rigid, since the reasoning part knows that it has its rules from the Intellect.[48]

> If, therefore, it [the reasoning part] says that it is from Intellect and second after Intellect and an image of Intellect, having in itself everything as if written [in it], as the one who writes and has written is there [in Intellect], will one who knows himself as far as this stop there, but shall we by using another power as well behold also the Intellect which knows itself,

45 Cf. Ham 2000, 120–121. Mortley is aware of Ham's point (Mortley 2013, 72n9), but disagrees and merely states: "In fact we are all kings." (72).

46 Ham 2000, 116 (my translation).

47 V 3 [49] 4, 7–15 (Armstrong, slightly revised): ὡς τὸν γινώσκοντα ἑαυτὸν διττὸν εἶναι, τὸ μὲν γινώσκοντα τῆς διανοίας τῆς ψυχικῆς φύσιν, τὸν δὲ ὑπεράνω τούτου, τὸν γινώσκοντα ἑαυτὸν κατὰ τὸν νοῦν ἐκεῖνον γινόμενον· κἀκείνῳ ἑαυτὸν νοεῖν αὖ οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπον ἔτι, ἀλλὰ παντελῶς ἄλλον γενόμενον καὶ συναρπάσαντα ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸ ἄνω μόνον ἐφέλκοντα τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄμεινον, ὃ καὶ δύναται μόνον πτεροῦσθαι πρὸς νόησιν, ἵνα τις ἐκεῖ παρακαταθοῖτο ἃ εἶδε.

48 Cf. V 3 [49] 4, 15–20.

> or, having a part in that Intellect, since that is ours and we belong to it, shall we in this way know Intellect and ourselves?[49]

Earlier in this treatise Plotinus had written that the intellect is "ours" and "not ours," but now he writes that it is "ours" and that "we" belong to it. The relation to the intellect which depended on "our" use, "our" turning towards it, has become a solid relation. There has been a development towards a more stable connection to intellect, and it is the aim of the text to produce this development in the reader. Plotinus' words do not only have a descriptive, but also an anagogic function: he wants to encourage his listeners and readers to strive for this ascent, and the usage of "we" serves as a tool of encouragement because it includes them in the quest towards Intellect.[50]

This feature requires a good deal of self-reflection and reflections on our abilities. Unlike the intellect, the soul thinks itself only "as belonging to another."[51] Furthermore, "It does seem that we seek to persuade ourselves rather than to behold truth by pure intellect."[52] Even though "we" are capable of the union with the intellect as shown in the previous discussion, even though the intellect is "ours," the vision of truth through the intellect is not what "we" usually strive for; the soul searches for conviction or persuasion rather then for the knowledge of necessity and truth.[53] The reason for this weakness is that "we" are not in the intellect anymore. When "we" are there, in the vision, in the intellect "we" are at rest,[54] but when "we" are "here" there is a search: "But since we have come to be here below again and in soul, we seek for some kind of persuasion, as if we wanted to contemplate the archetype in the image."[55] The soul needs help in this search, and Plotinus suggests to teach "our soul" what kind of knowledge the intellect possesses and to show that it possesses one part which is similar to the intellect, the *dianoetic* which has the intellect, *nous*, in his name, and thereby signals the connection to the intellect.[56]

---

49 V 3 [49] 4, 20–26 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Εἰ οὖν λέγοι, ὅτι ἀπὸ νοῦ ἐστι καὶ δεύτερον μετὰ νοῦν καὶ εἰκὼν νοῦ, ἔχον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ πάντα οἷον γεγραμμένα, ὡς ἐκεῖ ὁ γράφων καὶ ὁ γράψας, ἆρ' οὖν στήσεται μέχρι τούτων ὁ οὕτως ἑαυτὸν ἐγνωκώς, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄλλῃ δυνάμει προσχρησάμενοι νοῦν αὖ γινώσκοντα ἑαυτὸν κατοψόμεθα ἢ ἐκεῖνον μεταλαβόντες, ἐπείπερ κἀκεῖνος ἡμέτερος καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐκείνου, οὕτω νοῦν καὶ αὐτοὺς γνωσόμεθα;

50 Cf. Ham 2000, 128.

51 V 3 [49] 6, 1–4 (Armstrong).

52 V 3 [49] 6, 10–12 (Armstrong): Ζητοῦμεν δή, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἡμεῖς πεισθῆναι μᾶλλον ἢ νῷ καθαρῷ θεᾶσθαι τὸ ἀληθές.

53 Cf. Beierwaltes 1991, 202–205; Ham 2000, 143–145.

54 Cf. V 3 [49] 6, 12–15.

55 V 3 [49] 6, 16–18 (Armstrong): Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐνταῦθα γεγενήμεθα πάλιν αὖ καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ, πειθώ τινα γενέσθαι ζητοῦμεν, οἷον ἐν εἰκόνι τὸ ἀρχέτυπον θεωρεῖν ἐθέλοντες.

56 Cf. V 3 [49] 6, 18–22.

The dynamics of the conception of the "we" is noteworthy. The "we" is dynamic; we can descend and ascend.[57] And "we" do not possess the unity the intellect has, "for our life is divided and we have many lives."[58] Thus, the "we" is not necessarily the rational soul,[59] but it can refer to the whole human being, it can include lower faculties, but it can and is encouraged to ascend to the higher realm of the intellect. The dynamic construction of the "we" is meant to point out the starting point of the ascent and its goal and is thus meant to be anagogic, i.e. not only to describe the ascent, but to encourage listeners and readers to start their journey on this path.

---

57 Cf. V 3 [49] 8, 35–48. Cf. on this passage Chiaradonna 2008.

58 V 3 [49] 9, 23–24 (Armstrong): μεμέρισται γὰρ ἡμῖν ἡ ζωὴ καὶ πολλαὶ ζωαί.

59 Contra O'Daly 1973, 41 who assumes that V 3 [49] supports a theory in which "the self and the *psychê logizomenê* are unequivocally identified."

CHAPTER 5

We as the Center of Consciousness

1 Inner Consciousness

The novel idea of the "we" as the center of consciousness is first presented in IV 8 [6] *On the descent of the soul into bodies*.[1] Plotinus is, once again, wrestling with Plato and his statements about the soul and its relation to the body; "we" are described as souls, human beings and as parts of the cosmos. While reflecting on these topics, Plotinus develops the topic of the inner consciousness as an essential facet of the *hêmeis*.

The opening passage of treatise IV 8 [6] on the descent of the soul is famous. Plotinus speaks of his union with Intellect and the subsequent descent.[2] This experience is the starting point for a reflection on the soul and its connection with the body, and Plotinus turns to Presocratic philosophers and Plato for answers. In this context, Plotinus uses "us" several times when he is talking about "us" as the philosophers who try to understand what Heraclitus and others and especially Plato said about the soul and its descent. Plotinus first reads the statements of the Presocratics as riddles, which encourage "us" to search for ourselves.[3] Then he turns to Plato from whom he expects clarity. But, at least at first sight, Plato seems to contradict himself. Sometimes he denigrates the body and describes it as a grave or a chain upon the soul, which has to rid itself of this prison,[4] but the dialogue *Timaeus* praises the cosmos as a "blessed god":

> and [Plato] says that the soul was given by the goodness of the Craftsman, so that this All might be intelligent, because it had to be intelligent, and this could not be without soul. The Soul of the All, then, was sent into it for this reason by the god, and the soul of each one of us was sent so that the All might be perfect: since it was necessary that all the very same kinds of

1 On this treatise cf. especially D'Ancona 2003; Fleet 2012.

2 Cf. IV 8 [6] 1, 1–11. Cf. D'Ancona 2003, 131–137; Chiaradonna 2005; Fleet 2012, 71–76; Bertozzi 2021, 292–293 with a detailed overview of different interpretations in note 24. On this passage as a description of the union with Intellect cf. O'Meara 1974; Beierwaltes 1985, 123n1; O'Meara 1993, 104–105; Bussanich 1994, 5305, 5312; Bussanich 1997, 347–349; Hadot 1987; Hadot 1986, 240–241; O'Meara 2010; Emilsson 2017, 338 (for a different reading cf. Thesleff 1980, 102).

3 Cf. below 118–119.

4 Cf. IV 8 [6] 1, 27–41.

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_007

> living things which were in the intelligible world should also exist in the world perceived by the senses.[5]

When, in this passage, Plotinus speaks of the coming of the world-soul to the All and of the "souls of each one of us" he opposes world-soul and individual souls; "each one of us" is an expression for "us human beings."

> So that what happens to us when we seek to learn from Plato about our own soul is that we have also to undertake a general enquiry about soul, about how it has ever become naturally adapted to fellowship with body.[6]

"We" are those who philosophize and want to learn from Plato about "our soul." In this case, philosophical inquiry is a reflection not about just any topic, but about ourselves and about "our own soul." Philosophy is self-investigation. "Our" soul is the human soul which is—according to some pessimistic passages in Plato—chained to the body and has to free itself from it. Plato's *Timaeus* paints, however, a more positive picture of the soul's descent into the sensible realm, and the world-soul is connected to a body without suffering or being distracted by it. Plotinus thus proposes to investigate the specific connections of the world-soul and "our souls" to their respective bodies. The crucial difference is that "our souls" "since they direct worse bodies, had to sink deep into the world because of them."[7] Human bodies are imperfect and they require care whereas the world-soul has a perfect body which is free of desire and does not suffer so that the world-soul is not bothered by it.[8] But the human soul—"our soul"—can lift itself up to the purity of the world-soul:

> For this reason Plato says that our soul as well, if it comes to be with that perfect soul, is perfected itself and 'walks on high and directs the whole

5 IV 8 [6] 1, 43–50 (Armstrong): τήν τε ψυχὴν παρὰ ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἔννουν τόδε τὸ πᾶν εἶναι δεδόσθαι, ἐπειδὴ ἔννουν μὲν αὐτὸ ἔδει εἶναι, ἄνευ δὲ ψυχῆς οὐχ οἷόν τε ἦν τοῦτο γενέσθαι. Ἥ τε οὖν ψυχὴ ἡ τοῦ παντὸς τούτου χάριν εἰς αὐτὸ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπέμφθη, ἥ τε ἑκάστου ἡμῶν, πρὸς τὸ τέλεον αὐτὸ εἶναι· ἐπειδὴ ἔδει, ὅσα ἐν νοητῷ κόσμῳ, τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα γένη ζῷων καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰσθητῷ ὑπάρχειν.

6 IV 8 [6] 2, 1–4 (Armstrong): Ὥστε ἡμῖν συμβαίνει περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ μαθεῖν ζητήσασιν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐφάπτεσθαι καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς ὅλως ζητῆσαι, πῶς ποτε κοινωνεῖν σώματι πέφυκε.

7 IV 8 [6] 2, 7–8 (Armstrong): ὡς ἡμέτεραι, ψυχαὶ ἴσως, ἃς ἔδει σώματα διοικούσας χείρω δι' αὐτῶν εἴσω πολὺ δῦναι.

8 Cf. IV 8 [6] 2, 8–19.

> universe'; when it distances itself to be no longer within bodies and not to belong to any of them, then it also like the Soul of the All will share with ease in the directing of the All.[9]

The care for what is lower does not necessarily hinder the soul in its turn towards the upper realm. If it cares for the lower in a kingly way, it can remain in the higher realm and is not tainted by the care. This kind of care belongs to the world-soul; individual souls are usually involved in a lower form of care.[10]

In what follows Plotinus develops the theory that it is not only not bad for the soul to come forth and vivify the body, but even necessary and good—even though it is clear that the soul should not get lost in the bodily world and should not remain there. However, rather than punishment for the soul, as some other texts seem to suggest, here Plotinus argues that embodiment is necessary not only for the perfection of the cosmos but even for the perfection and development of the soul itself and its functions.[11] The idea of the perfection of the cosmos stems from Plato's *Timaeus*, but Plotinus goes a surprising step beyond: the soul needs embodiment for its own perfection. If the soul remained in the intelligible, its capabilities would not come forth; what soul is and what it is capable of would remain unrealized:

> —in the same way there must not be just souls alone either, without the manifestation of the things produced through them, if this is in every nature, to produce what comes after it and to unfold itself as a seed does, from a partless beginning which proceeds to the final stage perceived by the senses, with what comes before abiding for ever in its own proper dwelling-place, but, in a way, bringing to birth what comes after it from a power unspeakably great, all the power which was in those higher beings, which could not stand still as if it had drawn a line round itself in selfish jealousy, but had to go on for ever, until all things have reached the ultimate possible limit [impelled] by the power itself, which sends them out and cannot leave anything without a share of itself.[12]

---

9 IV 8 [6] 2, 19–24 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Διὸ καί φησι καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν, εἰ μετ' ἐκείνης γένοιτο τελέας, τελεωθεῖσαν καὶ αὐτὴν μετεωροπορεῖν καὶ πάντα τὸν κόσμον διοικεῖν, ὅτε ἀφίσταται εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐντὸς εἶναι τῶν σωμάτων μηδέ τινος εἶναι, τότε καὶ αὐτὴν ὥσπερ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς συνδιοικήσειν ῥᾳδίως τὸ πᾶν.

10 Cf. IV 8 [6] 2, 24–33. On the topic of care cf. D'Ancona 2003, 153–154.

11 Cf. IV 8 [6] 5–7. Cf. Armstrong 1940, 61–63. Cf. for a detailed development of the following point Stock 2016a.

12 IV 8 [6] 6, 6–16 (Armstrong): τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον οὐδὲ ψυχὰς ἔδει μόνον εἶναι μὴ τῶν δι' αὐτὰς γενομένων φανέντων, εἴπερ ἑκάστῃ φύσει τοῦτο ἔνεστι τὸ μετ' αὐτὴν ποιεῖν καὶ ἐξελίττεσθαι οἷον

It is better for the soul to be in the intelligible realm, but it is not according to its nature to remain there because it has an amphibian nature and has to work in the intelligible and the sensible realm.[13] It has a double activity, a double *ergon*: to think and to set in order.[14]

> If it escapes quickly it takes no harm by acquiring a knowledge of evil and coming to know the nature of wickedness, and manifesting its powers, making apparent works and activities which if they had remained quiescent in the spiritual world would have been of no use because they would never have come into actuality; and the soul itself would not have known the powers it had if they had not come out and been revealed. Actuality everywhere reveals completely hidden potency, in a way obliterated and non-existent because it does not yet truly exist.[15]

The descent of the soul is not only necessary for the cosmos or the body, but for its own perfection. If the soul escapes in time it will have gained "knowledge of evil"[16] and it will have actualized its own powers. Treatise IV 8 [6] thus suggests a surprisingly positive picture of the descent or rather of the forthcoming of the soul[17]—other treatises paint a more severe picture of the soul's association

---

σπέρματος ἔκ τινος ἀμεροῦς ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἰούσης, μένοντος μὲν ἀεὶ τοῦ προτέρου ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ἕδρᾳ, τοῦ δὲ μετ' αὐτὸ οἷον γεννωμένου ἐκ δυνάμεως ἀφάτου, ὅση ἐν ἐκείνοις, ἣν οὐκ ἔδει στῆσαι οἷον περιγράψαντα φθόνῳ, χωρεῖν δὲ ἀεί, ἕως εἰς ἔσχατον μέχρι τοῦ δυνατοῦ τὰ πάντα ἥκῃ αἰτίᾳ δυνάμεως ἁπλέτου ἐπὶ πάντα παρ'αὐτῆς πεμπούσης καὶ οὐδὲν περιιδεῖν ἄμοιρον αὐτῆς δυναμένης.

13 Cf. IV 8 [6] 4, 29–35. Cf. Schniewind 2005.

14 Cf. IV 8 [6] 3, 22–30. On the double activity cf. Tornau 2001, 24, 33–34.

15 IV 8 [6] 5, 27–36 (Armstrong): κἂν μὲν θᾶττον φύγῃ, οὐδὲν βέβλαπται γνῶσιν κακοῦ προσλαβοῦσα καὶ φύσιν κακίας γνοῦσα τάς τε δυνάμεις ἄγουσα αὑτῆς εἰς τὸ φανερὸν καὶ δείξασα ἔργα τε καὶ ποιήσεις, ἃ ἐν τῷ ἀσωμάτῳ ἠρεμοῦντα μάτην τε ἂν ἦν εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ἀεὶ οὐκ ἰόντα, τήν τε ψυχὴν αὐτὴν ἔλαθεν ἂν ἃ εἶχεν οὐκ ἐκφανέντα οὐδὲ πρόοδον λαβόντα· εἴπερ πανταχοῦ ἡ ἐνέργεια τὴν δύναμιν ἔδειξε κρυφθεῖσαν ἂν ἁπάντη καὶ οἷον ἀφανισθεῖσαν καὶ οὐκ οὖσαν μηδέποτε ὄντως οὖσαν. Cf. IV 8 [6] 7, 12–17.

16 Cf. Lauvaud 2002, 264n82: "mais au contraire cette connaissance a une valeur positive, au même titre que l'exercice de la puissance productrice de l'âme à laquelle elle est ici associée." Cf. ibid. 267n100: "Ici apparaît l'idée audacieuse que l'épreuve du mal peut être une sorte d'expérience négative du bien. Le sensible révélerait donc en creux, par contrast, ce qu'est l'intelligible." O'Brien 1971, 131: "Both a soul that is sinful and a soul that is sinless may acquire knowledge of evil, and they may both benefit from doing so." Rist 1967b, 126, however, thinks the passage is strange.

17 Armstrong 1940, 61–63 also underlines how unusual it is, but he focuses on the emanation from the One and not on the soul when he discusses the "spermatic" and maybe Stoic passages in IV 8 [6].

with the body, especially when Plotinus wants to underline the importance of freeing the soul from all bodily connections. But he is clearly not a Gnostic who speaks of a fall of the soul, and he considers the sensible cosmos as a good image of the intelligible world.

Plotinus does not use the words "our soul" or "us" when he is developing these ideas, but he comes back to this terminology in the last chapter of the treatise:

> And if one ought to dare to express one's view more clearly, contradicting the opinion of others,[18] even our soul does not altogether come down, but there is always something of it in the intelligible; but if the part which is in the world of sense-perception gets control, or rather if it is itself brought under control, and thrown into confusion [by the body], it prevents us from perceiving the things which the upper part of the soul contemplates.[19]

The theory of the undescended part of the soul is one of Plotinus' central ideas, and it can be found in earlier and later treatises.[20] The soul does not descend completely, one part of it remains in the intelligible world. Many later neoplatonists disagreed with Plotinus on this account; they assume that the soul descends entirely and needs theurgic practices to ascend and return to the origin.[21] According to Plotinus, however, the soul never loses its connection to the upper realm and its capacity to ascend by itself.

In this discussion the notion "our soul" stands again for the human soul. Yet, Plotinus also introduces a second topic, the inner perception or conscious-

---

18 There is, a discussion who the "others" are against whom he defends this thesis. Most interpreters think that Plotinus is arguing against other Platonists (cf. Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 440; Dörrie and Baltes 2002, 202; D'Ancona 2003, 205–206). Some think that this thesis is the result of personal experience (Rist 1967a, 417). Szlezák thinks that its origin is in Plotinus' interpretation of Plato, especially of *Republic* X and the myth of the soul in the *Phaedrus* (cf. Szlezák 2000, 177–191, esp. 184; Szlezák 1979, 167–205). J.-M. Narbonne, on the other hand, defends the thesis that Plotinus argues against the Gnostics (cf. Narbonne 2011, 55–77 [Study 2]. Against Narbonne cf. D'Ancona 2003, 205–206).

19 IV 8 [6] 8, 1–6 (Armstrong): Καὶ εἰ χρὴ παρὰ δόξαν τῶν ἄλλων τολμῆσαι τὸ φαινόμενον λέγειν σαφέστερον, οὐ πᾶσα οὐδ' ἡ ἡμετέρα ψυχὴ ἔδυ, ἀλλ' ἔστι τι αὐτῆς ἐν τῷ νοητῷ ἀεί· τὸ δὲ ἐν τῷ αἰσθητῷ εἰ κρατοῖ, μᾶλλον δὲ εἰ κρατοῖτο καὶ θορυβοῖτο, οὐκ ἐᾷ αἴσθησιν ἡμῖν εἶναι ὧν θεᾶται τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄνω.

20 Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 440; Rist 1967a; Szlezák 1979, 167–205; Hadot 1997, 28–32; Chiaradonna 2005; Stock 2020, 70–72.

21 Cf. above p. 4.

ness.[22] The lower functions of the soul and their confusion prevent "us" from perceiving what the upper part of the soul contemplates—or what the soul contemplates insofar as it has not descended. Something in "our soul" remains in the intelligible realm, but "we" do not always know what or even that it contemplates. "Our soul" therefore includes something that is hidden to "us." "We," however, denotes the center of consciousness. Plotinus writes:

> For what is grasped by the intellect reaches us when it arrives at perception in its descent, for we do not know everything which happens in any part of the soul before it reaches the whole soul; for instance desire which remains in the desiring part is not known by us, but only when we apprehend it by the power of inner sense or discursive reason, or both.[23]

Something, whether it is knowledge or desire, can only be known by "us" when "we" grasp it with our inner sense of perception or rational faculty. "We" do not realize, for instance, that "we" are hungry when "we" are immersed in what "we" are reading. And "we" do not see what is in front of our eyes when "we" are lost in contemplation. These perceptions have arrived in the perceptive part of the soul or its desiring part, but "we" do not know them (yet). The same is true for intellective thought which has to be unfolded in order to become conscious thought as well. Elsewhere Plotinus attributes the unfolding and consciousness to the imagination, but he does not mention this faculty here.[24] Thus, many things belong to "our soul," desires and intellective thought, but "we" do not always perceive this. "We" thus denotes the center of consciousness as opposed to all that belongs to the soul.

Plotinus ends with another comparison between individual soul and world-soul:

> For every soul has something of what is below, in the direction of the body, and of what is above, in the direction of Intellect. And the soul which is a whole and is the soul of the whole, but with its part which is directed to

22 Harder translates "zu Bewußtsein kommt," while Armstrong ("perceiving") and Lavaud ("percevoir") are closer to the Greek *aisthêsis*.

23 IV 8 [6] 8, 6–11 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Τότε γὰρ ἔρχεται εἰς ἡμᾶς τὸ νοηθέν, ὅταν εἰς αἴσθησιν ἥκῃ καταβαῖνον· οὐ γὰρ πᾶν, ὃ γίγνεται περὶ ὁτιοῦν μέρος ψυχῆς, γινώσκομεν, πρὶν ἂν εἰς ὅλην τὴν ψυχὴν ἥκῃ· οἷον καὶ ἐπιθυμία ἐν τῷ ἐπιθυμητικῷ μένουσα ⟨οὐ⟩ γιγνώσκεται ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ὅταν τῇ αἰσθητικῇ τῇ ἔνδον δυνάμει ἢ καὶ διανοητικῇ ἀντιλαβώμεθα ἢ ἄμφω.

24 On imagination cf. p. 4, note 18.

> body, orders the whole while remaining above, effortless, because it does not do so by calculating and considering, as we do, but by intellect.[25]

Earlier in the text Plotinus had underlined how close the individual soul and the world-soul are. Now he underscores an important difference. The world-soul directs the All through *nous* and not through *logismos*, i.e. through the higher intellective thought and not the discursive and calculating part of the soul which is typical for human souls—for "us." Here, "us" is a synonym for "our soul" whereas it was distinguished from the soul as the center of consciousness before. In the first sense "we" are the human soul, in the second sense it is a narrower notion than the soul as it only encompasses what is conscious and that may be on a higher or on a lower level.

The most important new aspect in this chapter is the meaning of *hêmeis* as the center of consciousness. "We" are, in this sense, not all of what "we" can be and have in "us," but "we" are what "we" focus on. Plotinus also keeps using "we" in the senses discussed in the previous chapters, and the notion thus gains a higher complexity. It is dynamic and is used both in the sense of what "we" are and what "we" can and should be. It thereby connects ethical and epistemological aspects. "We" can place our focus on different levels, just for a moment, in a very common switch of attention—that is mainly an epistemological point, i.e. a reflection about our capacity to focus our attention on lower and higher aspects of all that somehow belongs to us. Furthermore, "we" can also attempt to change our focus with the goal of a more permanent development towards a higher level, towards rationality and even to the level of intellect—this is the ethical aspect which points towards a formation of the soul. Treatise IV 8 [6] shows that these two aspects are connected: In order to form ourselves and ascent "we" should aim to turn our center of consciousness upwards towards rationality and towards Intellect, and the more often and the more consistently "we" can do this the better because it will lead to more and more permanent change.

2 Unconscious to Us

Treatise V 1 [10][26] further develops the topic of the center of consciousness and of unconscious areas from treatise IV 8 [6]. Plotinus begins his treatise by ask-

25 IV 8 [6] 8, 11–15 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Πᾶσα γὰρ ψυχὴ ἔχει τι καὶ τοῦ κάτω πρὸς σῶμα καὶ τοῦ ἄνω πρὸς νοῦν. Καὶ ἡ μὲν ὅλη καὶ ὅλου τῷ αὐτῆς μέρει τῷ πρὸς τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὅλον κοσμεῖ ὑπερέχουσα ἀπόνως, ὅτι μηδ' ἐκ λογισμοῦ, ὡς ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ νῷ.

26 On this treatise cf. Brunner 1973; Perl 2015.

ing why the souls forgot their origin and turned towards what is low. The goal is, of course, to lead these souls back to their origin, and in order to do this one has to show them how low everything they admire here is and how high their own worth.[27] In reference to Plato's *Phaedrus*,[28] soul is presented as the principle which gives life and movement to the cosmos. It vivifies everything and is different from it:

> But soul is not like that, and does not make things living by being cut up into a part of itself for each one, but all things live by the whole [soul], and all [soul] is present everywhere, made like to the father who generated it with regard to unity and ubiquity. And the universe which is multiple, having one part here and another there, is one by [soul's] power, and through [soul] this cosmos is a god. And the sun is a god because it is ensouled, and the other stars, and we ourselves, if we are divine at all, for this reason; for 'corpses are more to be thrown away than dung.'[29]

Because of the soul this world is a god, and the same is true for the sun, the stars and—"if we are divine at all"[30]—for "us." "We" are something that is worthy only because of the soul. This means that "we" and soul are not identical; the "we" has to include a body as the stars have bodies. Nonetheless, this body does not add to the worth of the "we" as the citation from Heraclitus shows;[31] the valuable element is the soul. This precious soul is, however, not always visible:

> But our [soul] is of the same kind, and when you look at it without accretions, taking it purified, you will find the same honorable thing that we said soul was, more honorable than all that is bodily.[32]

---

27 Cf. V 1 [10] 1, 1–35.

28 Cf. Plato, *Phdr*. 245e7–246e1.

29 V 1 [10] 2, 35–42 (Perl, slightly revised): Ἀλλ' οὐχ ἡ ψυχὴ οὕτως, οὐδὲ μέρει αὐτῆς ἑκάστῳ κατακερματισθεῖσα [μορίῳ ψυχῆς] ζῇν ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ τὰ πάντα ζῇ τῇ ὅλῃ, καὶ πάρεστι πᾶσα πανταχοῦ τῷ γεννήσαντι πατρὶ ὁμοιουμένη καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἓν καὶ κατὰ τὸ πάντη. Καὶ πολὺς ὢν ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἄλλος ἄλλῃ ἕν ἐστι τῇ ταύτης δυνάμει καὶ θεός ἐστι διὰ ταύτην ὁ κόσμος ὅδε. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἥλιος θεός, ὅτι ἔμψυχος, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἄστρα, καὶ ἡμεῖς, εἴπερ τι, διὰ τοῦτο· νέκυες γὰρ κοπρίων ἐκβλητότεροι.

30 I do not follow Perl's translation of *eiper ti* as "if anything [is a god] at all" (cf. Perl 2015, 79; Atkinson 1983, 40–41); in my view, Plotinus does not assume that we "are the prime candidates for godhead" (Atkinson 1983, 41), but we are below the sun and the stars, and it is rather a matter of doubt than certainty whether we are divine. Cf. "s'il y a quelque chose de divin en nous" (Fronterotta); "und wir, wenn wir denn etwas sind" (Harder).

31 Cf. Heraclitus, DK B96.

32 V 1 [10] 2, 44–47 (Perl): Ὁμοειδὴς δὲ καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα, καὶ ὅταν ἄνευ τῶν προσελθόντων σκοπῇς

Unlike the world-soul and the souls of the stars "our" soul is not always in the same state. Something can be added on to it, and it does not always remain in its pure and simple state. Plotinus uses a similar image in treatise I 6 [1] which describes the soul as tarnished.[33] "Our" soul does not remain in a pure state as the higher souls do, but has descended, forgetting its origin and itself. Its high origin only becomes apparent when it purifies itself and makes apparent again its good and beautiful character. The addition comes through the connection with the body, but this does not mean that every connection with the body is evil; the heavenly bodies and the universe are of bodily nature as well, yet they are not tarnished by this connection, and the human soul too can be connected to the body in a similar fashion. Thus, Plotinus defines "our soul" as the human soul whose fate it is to be connected to a body. But it is within "our" soul's power to be connected to the body without being hindered and tarnished by it and to be more like to higher souls who are not hindered by their bodies.

The soul has this capacity because it is linked to the higher realm. The higher principles from which it springs are in some imperceptible way part of us:

> And just as in nature there are these three aforesaid [i.e. the One, Intellect, Soul], so we must acknowledge these also in ourselves. I mean, not in [ourselves] as sensible things—for these [three] are separate—but above these, outside of sensible things, 'outside' in the same sense that these things are 'outside' the whole universe; so also, in the things that pertain to man, [I mean] the sort of thing that Plato calls 'the inner human being.' Our soul, then, is something divine and of another nature [than sensible things], as is all the nature of soul ...[34]

Plotinus advances the bold thesis that the One, Intellect and Soul do not just exist in themselves, but also "in us" (most later Neoplatonists did not agree).[35] Plotinus refers to Plato's image of the "inner human being" in order to explain

---

λαβὼν κεκαθαρμένην, εὑρήσεις τὸ αὐτὸ τίμιον, ὃ ἦν ψυχή, καὶ τιμιώτερον παντὸς τοῦ ὃ ἂν σωματικὸν ᾖ.

33 On the images in treatise I 6 [1] cf. Stock 2013.

34 V 1 [10] 10, 5–12 (Perl, slightly revised): Ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν τῇ φύσει τριττὰ ταῦτά ἐστι τὰ εἰρημένα, οὕτω χρὴ νομίζειν καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ταῦτα εἶναι. Λέγω δὲ οὐκ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς—χωριστὰ γὰρ ταῦτα—ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τοῖς αἰσθητῶν ἔξω, καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον τὸ 'ἔξω' ὥσπερ κἀκεῖνα τοῦ παντὸς οὐρανοῦ ἔξω· οὕτω καὶ τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οἷον λέγει Πλάτων τὸν εἴσω ἄνθρωπον. Ἔστι τοίνυν καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα ψυχὴ θεῖόν τι καὶ φύσεως ἄλλης, ὁποία πᾶσα ἡ ψυχῆς φύσις·

35 Cf. Proclus, *In Parm.* IV (948, 12–20), Proclus, *ET* 211. Cf. Armstrong 1966–1988, 150–151, note 1; Henry 1938, 220–221; Guyot 2003, 357–358, note 47; Dillon 2005; Stock 2020, 70–72; 172–173; 215–218.

how these intelligible entities can be in the human being. In his *Republic*, Plato indeed speaks of the inner human being, *ho entos anthrôpos*,[36] which represents the rational soul, the outer human being that encloses it and the two lower parts of the soul that are represented by a lion and a polycephalic animal.[37] The Platonic image certainly underscores the importance of the inner, psychic being as the true part of a human being, but it is not a proof for what Plotinus tries to show, since it does not speak of a part of the soul that remains in the intelligible. Plotinus, however, claims to find hints of this theory elsewhere in Plato as well:

> This is why [Plato] says with regard to the whole [universe] that [the demiurge] 'then' cast the soul around it 'from outside,' indicating that [aspect] of the soul which remains in the intelligible; and with regard to us he said obscurely that it is 'on top,' in the head.[38]

Plato's *Timaeus* mentions the soul which is wrapped around the All and the highest form of soul which is "'on top,' in the head."[39] A later passage in the dialogue mentions "the most lordly kind of our soul," the soul that god gave "to each of us, as his daemon" and "which is housed in the top of our body."[40] Plotinus interprets this passage as a covert hint at his theory of the non-descended part of the soul, and he uses the soul's reasonings as a proof for the presence of the One and Intellect in the soul:

> And if soul sometimes reasons about these things and sometimes does not, there must be in us intellect, which does not reason discursively but always possesses justice; and there must be the principle and cause and god of intellect. Not being divided, he remains, and as he does not remain in place, he must, again, be contemplated in many things, in each of those that are able to receive him, as other.[41]

---

36 Plato, *Rep*. 589a–b.

37 Cf. Plato, *Rep*. 588c–589b. Cf. Markschies 1998, 267–268.

38 V 1 [10] 10, 21–24 (Perl): Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἔτι ἔξωθέν φησιν ἐπὶ τοῦ παντὸς τὴν ψυχὴν περιέβαλεν ἐνδεικνύμενος τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ μένον· ἐπὶ δὲ ἡμῶν ἐπικρύπτων ἐπ' ἄκρᾳ εἴρηκε τῇ κεφαλῇ.

39 Cf. Plato, *Tim*. 34b3–4, 36e2–4 and 90a5. Cf. Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 507. Tornau 2001, 356, note 71; Fronterotta 2003, 205, note 161.

40 Plato, *Tim*. 90a2–5 (Bury). Cf. Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 508; Fronterotta 2003, 205, note 162.

41 V 1 [10] 11, 4–10 (Perl): Καὶ εἰ ὁτὲ μὲν λογίζεται περὶ τούτων ψυχή, ὁτὲ δὲ μή, δεῖ τὸν ⟨μὴ⟩ λογιζόμενον, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ἔχοντα τὸ δίκαιον νοῦν ἐν ἡμῖν εἶναι, εἶναι δὲ καὶ τὴν νοῦ ἀρχὴν καὶ αἰτίαν καὶ

The One, which is called God in these lines, and the Intellect are in the soul, "in us," that is in the human souls. Plotinus uses an image he already used in VI 9 [9][42] in order to explain how "That"[43] could be one and at the same time "in each and every one":

> as the center [of a circle] is in itself, but each of [the parts] in the circle has a point in it, and the radii bring to this what is proper to each. For by such a thing in us we too touch and are with and depend on it; and we who converge thither are established there.[44]

There is something in "us" which is in accordance with the One, "we" are always in connection with the Highest, and if "we" turn towards the One, we can be firmly "established" in it. Plotinus has thereby established that the higher realities are in "us," that we have the capacity to ascend and are not cut off from our origin. The objective statement that the One, Intellect and Soul are in "us" is, however, insufficient, since it does not correspond to "our" apprehension of this situation. Plotinus raises this question, thereby addressing again the topics of consciousness and unconscious parts of the soul.

> How then, since we possess such great things, do we not apprehend them, but are for the most part idle with regard to such activities, and some do not exercise them at all? [...] For not everything which is in soul is already perceptible, but it reaches us when it enters into perception. But when each active thing does not communicate with what is perceptive, it has not yet pervaded the whole soul. Hence we do not yet know, because we are [involved] with what is sensitive and are not a portion of soul but the whole soul. And further, each aspect of soul, since it is always living, always exercises by itself its own activity; but recognition occurs when there is communication and apprehension.[45]

θεόν—οὐ μεριστοῦ ἐκείνου ὄντος, ἀλλὰ μένοντος ἐκείνου, καὶ οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ μένοντος—ἐν πολλοῖς αὖ θεωρεῖσθαι καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν δυναμένων δέχεσθαι οἷον ἄλλον αὐτόν. On the translation of *hoion allon auton* cf. Atkinson 1983, 235–236 and Perl 2015, 176–177.

42 Cf. above p. 67.

43 The God, that is the One. Cf. Tornau 2001, 356, note 75 who refers to VI 9 [9] 1, 4–17; cf. Ferwerda 1965, 32, note 1. The following image is used in a similar fashion, i.e. the center of the circle as the One, elsewhere (cf. I 7 [54], 1, 24; IV 4 [28] 16, 21).

44 V 1 [10] 11, 10–15 (Perl): ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ κέντρον ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐστιν, ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν τῷ κύκλῳ σημεῖον ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ αἱ γραμμαὶ τὸ ἴδιον προσφέρουσι πρὸς τοῦτο. Τῷ γὰρ τοιούτῳ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐφαπτόμεθα καὶ σύνεσμεν καὶ ἀνηρτήμεθα· ἐνιδρύμεθα δὲ οἷ ἂν συννεύωμεν ἐκεῖ.

45 V 1 [10] 12, 1–12 (Perl): Πῶς οὖν ἔχοντες τὰ τηλικαῦτα οὐκ ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα, ἀλλ' ἀργοῦμεν

"We" are not necessarily aware of all that "we" have in ourselves.[46] "We" have the intellect and God in "us," but "we" are usually not aware of it. We have to distinguish between what is "in the soul" and what arrives "at us," and there is more of the former than of the latter. This is true for the One and the Intellect which are conscious only to few, but it is also correct for lower faculties, for perception and emotions which do not necessarily have to be conscious at all times. The capacity which is responsible for conscious thought and perception is the imagination, but Plotinus does not mention its name here. Plotinus only speaks of inner perception, but what he ascribes to it shows that he has in mind the faculty of imagination.[47]

V 1 [10] is certainly an essential text for the development of the theory of the "we." The description of "us" as containing, somehow, the One and Intellect, compels Plotinus to reflect on consciousness, since he wants to assert, on the one hand, that these realities are present in "us," but he has, on the other hand, to take into account that "we" are usually not aware of this presence. "We" is used in a double sense here. It is first of all used in a broad sense insofar as it encompasses the One, Intellect and Soul, it thereby signifies the whole soul, with all its functions, including the unconscious ones. Secondly, it is used in a narrower sense to signify the center of consciousness which is usually not aware of these higher realities, but has the capacity to turn upwards and become the intellect. In the first sense, it is opposed to the narrow definition of "we" as the rational soul from the *Alcibiades 1*. What "we" are is more than rationality because many other functions, higher and lower, belong to us as well. In the second sense it is opposed to the soul in a broad sense with all its conscious and unconscious functions. Both senses allow Plotinus to describe "us" as human beings and conscious subjects, our capacities and faculties, our shortcomings and potential, in a subtle way and to point out how "we" can shift the focus to a higher level, to the level on which we should live. Consciousness and the shift of the center of consciousness are central for the ascent. Epistemological and ethical aspects are closely linked.

ταῖς τοιαύταις ἐνεργείαις τὰ πολλά, οἱ δὲ οὐδ' ὅλως ἐνεργοῦσιν; [...] Οὐ γὰρ πᾶν, ὃ ἐν ψυχῇ, ἤδη αἰσθητόν, ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται εἰς ἡμᾶς, ὅταν εἰς αἴσθησιν ἴῃ· ὅταν δὲ ἐνεργοῦν ἕκαστον μὴ μεταδιδῷ τῷ αἰσθανομένῳ, οὔπω δι' ὅλης ψυχῆς ἐλήλυθεν. Οὔπω οὖν γιγνώσκομεν ἅτε μετὰ τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ ὄντες καὶ οὐ μόριον ψυχῆς ἀλλ' ἡ ἅπασα ψυχὴ ὄντες. Καὶ ἔτι ἕκαστον τῶν ψυχικῶν ζῶν ἀεὶ ἐνεργεῖ ἀεὶ καθ' αὑτὸ τὸ αὐτοῦ· τὸ δὲ γνωρίζειν, ὅταν μετάδοσις γένηται καὶ ἀντίληψις.

46 Cf. Hadot 1997, 32–33; Perl 2015, 179–182.

47 On imagination see p. 4, note 18.

3 The *daimôn* and "We"

Treatise III 4 [15][48] combines the topics of the general definition soul, of the presence of the higher levels in "us" from the previous treatise, of our relation to the higher realities, of consciousness and of "us" as responsible agents. This treatise is entitled "On our Allotted Guardian Spirit" or, to be more precise "On the *daimôn* that received us by lot."[49] The question of the *hêmeis* is included in the title Porphyry chose for it, using Plato's remarks about the personal *daimôn* in the *Phaedo*.

At the outset Plotinus writes that the soul produces sense-perception and the vegetative power.[50] This power, the lowest function of soul, belongs to everything that lives, to plants, animals and human beings, but it does not always have the same status. In plants it is the only kind of soul, and hence rules. In human beings it is present without ruling: "For soul also has this [power of growth] when it is in us, but it [the vegetative power] does ⟨not⟩ rule since it is a part".[51] "In us," in human beings, it is only a part, the lowest part of the soul, but it can nonetheless have an effect on the soul: "In human beings the lower parts do not rule, but they are present; and the better part does not always rule, for they are there and have a certain space."[52]

According to Plotinus, the individual soul's choice of the dominant part of the soul will not only affect this current life, but also the next life. When the soul leaves the body it will become what was dominant in it, a human being, an animal or a plant.[53] Plotinus first gives a beautiful enumeration of reincarnations which ends with the bee and other political animals, and then he writes: "Who, then, [becomes] a *daimôn*? He who was one here. And who a god? He who was one here."[54] Souls cannot only stay human or descend to the level of animals or plants, but they can also ascend beyond the human level to become a *daimôn* or a god. In this sense, *daimones* are higher beings, between gods and men, as

48 Cf. especially Adamson 2017; Stock 2020.

49 On the title cf. Kalligas 2014, 488. Stock 2020, 131–132.

50 Cf. III 4 [15] 1, 1–3.

51 III 4 [15] 1, 3–4 (Stock): Καὶ γὰρ ἔχει αὐτὴν καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν οὖσα, ⟨οὐ⟩ κρατεῖ δὲ μέρος οὖσα· On this emendation by Müller and other attempts to correct and translate the text cf. Stock 2020, 137–138.

52 III 4 [15] 2, 6–8 (Stock): Ἐν δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ οὐ κρατεῖ τὰ χείρω, ἀλλὰ σύνεστιν· οὐδέ γε τὸ κρεῖττον ἀεί· ἔστι γὰρ καὶ ταῦτα χώραν τινὰ ἔχοντα.

53 Cf. III 4 [15] 2, 11–30. On reincarnation in Plotinus cf. Rich 1957; Laurent 1999b; Stock 2020, 66–70; 152–157, on III 4 [15] 2, 16–30.

54 III 4 [15] 3, 1–2 (Stock): Τίς οὖν δαίμων; ὁ καὶ ἐνταῦθα. Τίς δὲ θεός; ἢ ὁ ἐνταῦθα. On the addition of the verb "become" cf. Stock 2020, 158–159.

in the Greek tradition before Plotinus and in Plato's *Symposium*.[55] Plotinus is, however, not primarily interested in this sense of the *daimôn*, and he turns the discussion away from the *daimôn* one *becomes* to the *daimôn* one has, i.e. the tutelary *daimôn* mentioned in the final myths of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*:[56]

> Is this, then, 'the *daimôn* to whom he was allotted while he lived'? No, but [that *daimôn* is] what is before it [that is, before the active part]. For this presides, while being inactive; what comes after it is active. And if what is active is that through which we perceive, the *daimôn* is the rational part. If we live according to the rational part, the *daimôn* is what presides over it, inactive, giving assent to the working part.[57]

The *daimôn* one has is not described as a tutelary spirit or an external divine force, but as a part of the soul. However, it is not, in every human being, the same part of the soul, but the inactive level which is above the active level, so that the *daimôn* of someone living on the level of sense-perception is rational thought and that of someone living on the rational level is the intellect. This definition of the *daimôn* can easily be reconciled with the definition from the *Republic*,[58] which otherwise seems to present a slight conflict, since here, the soul is not allotted to the *daimôn*, but chooses the *daimôn*:

> So it is said rightly that 'it is we who choose.' For we choose what superintends us according to the life [we choose].[59]

Plotinus rationalizes the idea of the *daimôn*, but it is, nonetheless more than a mere symbol for the choice of the *daimôn*, since it is an unconscious part of the soul which can or rather should gain influence.[60] In the myth of Er in the *Republic*, the choice takes place in the afterlife where the soul is in a discarnate state. Plotinus, however, reinterprets the mythical choice:

---

55 Cf. Stock 2020, 20–21; 28–29.

56 Cf. Stock 2020, 30–34; 160–161.

57 III 4 [15] 3, 3–8 (Stock): Ἆρ' οὖν τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ δαίμων, ὅσπερ ζῶντα εἰλήχει; Ἢ οὔ, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐφέστηκεν ἀργοῦν, ἐνεργεῖ δὲ τὸ μετ' αὐτόν. Καὶ εἰ μὲν τὸ ἐνεργοῦν ᾗ αἰσθητικοί, καὶ ὁ δαίμων τὸ λογικόν· εἰ δὲ κατὰ τὸ λογικὸν ζῷημεν, ὁ δαίμων τὸ ὑπὲρ τοῦτο ἐφεστὼς ἀργὸς συγχωρῶν τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ.

58 Cf. Plato, *Rep*. 617e1–2 (my translation): "The *daimôn* does not obtain you by lot, but you shall choose your *daimôn*."

59 III 4 [15] 3, 8–10 (Stock): Ὀρθῶς οὖν λέγεται ἡμᾶς αἱρήσεσθαι. Τὸν γὰρ ὑπερκείμενον κατὰ τὴν ζωὴν αἱρούμεθα.

60 Cf. Stock 2020, 76–85.

> But if it is there [in the other world] that the soul makes the choice of its *daimôn* and [its future] life, how can we still have power over anything [here]? Well, the choice there [Plato] speaks of refers, as in a riddle, in a general and absolute way, to the overall resolution and disposition of the soul.[61]

Plotinus rationalizes the idea of a mythical choice into the idea of a permanent will and decision of the soul in this embodied life. The soul, or "we," are still responsible, but it is not one single decision before the beginning of the life that determines our life, but an ongoing disposition and resolution to lead a certain form of life. This also entails that the body is not the reason for evil.[62]

The conception of the *daimôn* as the inactive level above the active level combines the passages in the *Phaedo* and in the *Republic* which propose different conceptions of the *daimôn*. Plotinus, however, also wants to integrate Plato's other diverging statement about the *daimôn* in the *Timaeus* where the *daimôn* is not an external divinity, but the highest part of the soul, i.e. the intellect.[63] The internalization of the *daimôn* in the *Timaeus* fits Plotinus' conception, but, in Plotinus' text, the *daimôn* can be, but is not necessarily, the intellect. Thus, Plotinus somehow leaves aside this aspect of the Platonic conception, but focuses on the question of whether the *daimôn* is internal or external:

> For that this *daimôn* is not altogether outside (but only to the extent that he is not bound to us) and he is not active, he is "ours" if we speak about the soul, but "not ours" if "we" are the human beings who have a life under him, according to the testimony of the *Timaeus*.[64]

The *daimôn* is ours insofar as "we" are the soul, since he is a level of the soul, the inactive level above the active level. If "we" are the human being, however,

---

61 III 4 [15] 5, 1–4 (Stock): Ἀλλ' εἰ ἐκεῖ αἱρεῖται τὸν δαίμονα καὶ εἰ τὸν βίον, πῶς ἔτι τινὸς κύριοι; Ἢ καὶ ἡ αἵρεσις ἐκεῖ ἡ λεγομένη τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς προαίρεσιν καὶ διάθεσιν καθόλου καὶ πανταχοῦ αἰνίττεται.

62 Cf. III 4 [15] 5, 4–9. Cf. Stock 2020, 188–189. Cf. also another account that underlines our responsibility, but without the recourse to the "we" in VI 7 [38] 6, 7–18.

63 Plato, *Tim*. 90a2–7. Cf. Stock 2020, 34–37 (on Plato).

64 III 4 [15] 5, 19–23 (Stock): Ὅτι γὰρ ὁ δαίμων οὗτος οὐ παντάπασιν ἔξω—ἀλλ' οὕτως ὡς μὴ συνδεδεμένος—οὐδ' ἐνεργῶν, ἡμέτερος δέ, ὡς ψυχῆς πέρι εἰπεῖν, οὐχ ὁ ἡμέτερος δέ, εἰ ὡς ἄνθρωποι τοιοίδε τὴν ὑπ' αὐτὸν ζωὴν ἔχοντες, μαρτυρεῖ τὰ ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ·

then "we" are just the combination of the body and the image of the soul,[65] the lower soul, and thus, the *daimôn* is, as the inactive level above the active level, above this living being.[66]

Plotinus distinguishes between what "we" are and what is "ours." "We" is the center and focus of our attention and consciousness while "what is ours" is related to "us," but in a more distanced way.[67]

At the end of the treatise Plotinus comes back to ideas he discussed at the beginning. He underscores the similarity of world-soul and "our soul" when he writes that "there also is a cosmos in our soul, not only an intelligible one, but a disposition of the same kind as the world-soul"[68] and that "our powers are of the same kind as those powers."[69] Plotinus defends his famous thesis that the intelligible cosmos is not only present in the realm beyond, but also in each individual soul.[70] Furthermore, all the powers from the world-soul—and here, Plotinus is mainly speaking about the world-soul permeating the higher world—are present in it as well. "We" contain or "we" are an intelligible universe, and all the powers of the world-soul are present in "us." "We" are thus connected to the upper world and to the stars in an intimate way since we partake in the same form of soul.[71]

4 Consciousness

Plotinus addresses the topic of consciousness again in his treatise IV 4 [28],[72] where he speaks both about self-consciousness and the consciousness which enables perception and thought. First of all, Plotinus compares "us" and the All: "We may grant it consciousness of itself, just as we have consciousness of ourselves, but we must not accord it sense-perception, which is always of something else."[73] The All may have consciousness of itself, but not sense-

65 On the image of the soul cf. p. 5, note 28.

66 Cf. Adamson 2017; Stock 2020, 195–197.

67 Cf. above chapter IV.2 (72–78).

68 III 4 [15] 6, 22–23 (Stock): κόσμον εἶναι ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἡμῶν μὴ μόνον νοητόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ψυχῆς τῆς κόσμου ὁμοειδῆ διάθεσιν·

69 III 4 [15] 6, 25–26 (Stock): ὁμοειδεῖς ταύταις ταῖς δυνάμεσι καὶ τὰς παρ' ἡμῖν εἶναι.

70 Cf. above p. 4.

71 Cf. Stock 2020, 215–219. On souls and stars cf. p. 3, note 8.

72 Treatises IV 3–4 [27–28] address many of the important aspects of the "we" and are thus treated in more than one chapter of this book.

73 IV 4 [28] 24, 21–23 (Dillon/Blumenthal): ἀλλὰ συναίσθησιν μὲν αὑτοῦ, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἡμῶν συναισθανόμεθα, δοτέον, αἴσθησιν δὲ ἀεὶ ἑτέρου οὖσαν οὐ δοτέον·

perception. "We," however, possess both "apprehension of what comes from outside," perception (*aisthêsis*), but also an internal apprehension of one part by another,[74] i.e. *synaisthêsis*, an inward perception.[75] Furthermore, the focus of our consciousness determines what "we" perceive: The soul can direct its attention to the higher realm and will then not have any sense-perceptions at all.[76]

> since sights and other perceptions do not come to our attention either when we are seriously concerned with intelligible realities, at the time when we are so concerned;[77]

When the soul is intensely involved in thought, no perception will come to its attention. "We" do not, for instance, realize that we are hungry, when we are deeply immersed in thought or a book. And this is generally true: "and as a general rule, if one is concentrating on one thing, the other things remain hidden."[78] Plotinus again does not mention the term here, but he elsewhere attributes this feature to the faculty of imagination. The imagination is like a mirror in which some impressions cannot appear while it is turned towards others.[79]

"Our" center of consciousness can be higher and lower, and it can shift according to the circumstances and to "our" will. Circumstances may direct "our" attention to our body and the sensible world, but "we" can also focus on the higher intelligible realm and thus block out sense-perceptions and passions. This dynamic is more circumstantial than that of the more permanent change of "our" way of life, but it is, of course, the basis for a more permanent change in "our" life. If "we" allow the body to gain importance, if "we" allow sense-perceptions and passions to fill the mirror of "our" imagination, "we" will live a lower life and thus not become what "we" should become. If, however, "we" do what we should do and "we" keep setting "our" center of consciousness to the higher realities, "we" will ascend and become what "we" should truly be.

---

74 IV 4 [28] 24, 25–28 (Dillon/Blumenthal).

75 On *aisthesis* and *synaisthesis* cf. Schroeder 1986a; Schroeder 1987, 682. Cf. Stock 2020, 179–180 with further references.

76 Cf. IV 4 [28] 25, 1–5.

77 IV 4 [28] 25, 5–7 (Dillon/Blumenthal): ὁπότε καὶ ἡμῖν σφόδρα πρὸς τοῖς νοητοῖς οὖσιν, ὅτε ἐσμέν, λανθάνουσι καὶ ὄψεις καὶ αἰσθήσεις ἄλλαι·

78 IV 4 [28] 25, 7–8 (Dillon/Blumenthal, slightly revised): κἂν πρὸς ἑτέρῳ δὲ ὅλως, τὰ ἕτερα λανθάνει.

79 On imagination cf. above p. 4, note 18.

5 Memory

In treatise IV 3–4 [27–28] Plotinus discusses memory,[80] among many other topics. Plotinus is mainly interested in the question what the soul remembers when it is no longer connected to the body.[81] Plotinus first asks what "it is in us that retains memory"[82] and attributes this *pathêma* to soul.[83] The body seems to have some influence since our bodily state can help or hinder memory,[84] but the soul is responsible for this faculty, as the body is in constant flux whereas memory requires "stability."[85] But the attribution of this faculty to soul is too vague:

> But to which soul, the one called by us the more divine, by which we are we, or to the other which we have from the whole?[86]

Plotinus distinguishes between two souls "the more divine, by which we are we" and "the other which we have from the whole." Brisson assumes that the first one is the "descended soul" and the second one the "vegetative soul."[87] However, in this passage, the latter soul is described in a way which suggests that it possesses more than the vegetative faculties since it seems to be somehow connected to memory. The soul "we" receive from the world or to be precise from the world-soul is often described as a soul which comprises the lower functions of the soul, vegetative functions, but also sense-perception and affections, i.e. the functions human beings share with animals.[88] When Plotinus raises the question whether memory might belong to this lower soul he clearly takes it in a slightly different meaning, comprising more functions. Generally, memory is a psychic function which stands somehow between the lower and higher faculties of the soul. But while Aristotle attributes memory to the fac-

---

80 On memory in Plotinus cf. Warren 1965; King 2009; Nikulin 2014; Stock 2024a (forthcoming).

81 Cf. IV 3 [27] 25, 1–5.

82 IV 3 [27] 25, 39–40 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Διὸ ζητητέον τί ἐστι τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ τὴν μνήμην ἴσχον.

83 Cf. IV 3 [27] 26, 55–56.

84 IV 3 [27] 26, 13–14 (Dillon/Blumenthal): ἐκ τοῦ ταῖς κράσεσι τῶν σωμάτων καὶ μνημονικοὺς καὶ ἐπιλήσμονας ἡμᾶς γίγνεσθαι

85 IV 3 [27] 26, 52–56 (Dillon/Blumenthal).

86 IV 3 [27] 27, 1–3 (Dillon/Blumenthal, slightly revised): Ἀλλὰ τίνος ψυχῆς, τῆς μὲν λεγομένης ὑφ' ἡμῶν θειοτέρας, καθ' ἣν ἡμεῖς, τῆς δὲ ἄλλης τῆς παρὰ τοῦ ὅλου;

87 Cf. Brisson 2005, 242, note 495: "Cette âme qui constitue notre identité est l'âme descendue, bien distinguée ici de l'âme végétative. L'âme descendue reste attacheé à l'âme non descendue, c'est-à-dire l'intellect."

88 Cf. p. 98.

ulty of sense-perception and is therefore forced to explain the connection to thought,[89] Plotinus goes a different route and attributes memories to both souls[90] and uses the episode of Heracles and his *eidôlon* from the *Odyssey*:[91]

> In any case, the shade of Heracles in Hades—I think we must consider this shade also to be us—remembers all the things that were done in his life, because his life belonged predominantly to the shade. But the other souls which became identified with the compound nevertheless had no more to say: it is merely what belonged to this life that these souls too knew about, other than perhaps something to do with justice, but what Heracles himself, the one separate from the shade, had to say is not mentioned.[92]

The exegesis of the Homeric passage suggests a different interpretation of the image of the soul; the *eidôlon* of Heracles is a version of the embodied soul and not merely the lower soul which usually comprises only the lower functions.[93] Here, the *eidôlon* has memory and opinion and the capacity to say something about justice, i.e. a general capacity to judge. O'Daly thus speaks of Plotinus' attempt "to describe the *historical personality*,"[94] and Remes wonders whether Plotinus "toyed with the idea that memory gives some foundation for personal identity."[95] This *eidôlon* is to be distinguished from "Heracles himself (*autos*),"

---

89 Aristotle thinks for instance that memory (*mnêmê*) only belongs to the intellect by accident, and truly only to the first principle of sense-perception (*aisthêtikon*). The reason he gives is that even the memory of thoughts is formed in images and that some animals possess memory (though not recollection [*anamimnêskesthai*]), if they have opinion (*doxa*) and judgment (*phronêsis*), but not thinking (cf. Aristotle, *De mem.* 450a12–18; 453a6–9). Cf. Bloch 2007, 61.

90 Cf. IV 3 [27] 27, 3–6 (Dillon/Blumenthal): "The answer is that we must say that there are memories proper to each of the two, some peculiar to each and some common to both. And when the two souls are together, the memories are all together, but when they become separate, if both were to exist and remain, each would have its own memories for a longer time, but also, for a short period, those of the other."

91 Cf. Homer, *Od.* 11.601–604. On this passage (which is probably a later addition to the text) cf. Pépin 1971; Schroeder 1986b, 354.

92 IV 3 [27] 27, 7–14 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Τὸ γοῦν εἴδωλον ἐν Ἅιδου Ἡρακλέους—τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ τὸ εἴδωλον, οἶμαι, χρὴ νομίζειν ἡμᾶς—μνημονεύειν τῶν πεπραγμένων πάντων κατὰ τὸν βίον, αὐτοῦ γὰρ μάλιστα καὶ ὁ βίος ἦν. Αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι τὸ συναμφότερον ⟨γενόμεναι⟩ [οὖσαι] οὐδὲν πλέον ὅμως εἶχον λέγειν· ἢ ἅ γε τοῦ βίου τούτου, καὶ αὐταὶ [τὸ συναμφότερον γενόμεναι] ταῦτα ᾔδεσαν· ἢ εἴ τι δικαιοσύνης ἐχόμενον. Ὁ δὲ Ἡρακλῆς αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνευ τοῦ εἰδώλου τί ἔλεγεν, οὐκ εἴρηται.

93 Cf. Caluori 2015, 179n70. On the image of the soul cf. p. 5, note 28.

94 O'Daly 1973, 27.

95 Remes 2008b, 129.

the Heracles who is dining with the gods according to the story in Homer, i.e. the higher, maybe even the undescended soul. Plotinus' usage of the Homeric passage shifts the definition of the *eidôlon* which is, only in this context, more than the kind of soul we share with animals. This *eidôlon* is a human soul which limits its focus to the human affairs and to its embodied life and does not turn towards its higher capacities; nonetheless it is not a depraved soul, but a soul which thinks about justice. This shade is distinct from Heracles himself, from "us" in a higher sense, in the intelligible realm. It is, of course, the goal to ascend to this higher level, but to speak of "us" as the ones who live the life in the sensible world is more than mere everyday usage and should not be undervalued because Plotinus explicitly writes that "we must consider this shade also to be us."[96] This is what "we" are in this world.

The penultimate chapter of IV 3 [27] returns to the idea of the two souls. Plotinus first tries to explain which capacity of the soul is responsible for memory, and he concludes that it must the faculty of imagination, the *phantastikon*.[97] If both have memory, both have to have imagination as well.[98] He asks:

> Let us grant that, when the souls are apart, they each have one, but when they are in the same place, in us, how are there two, and in which of them do the memories happen? If in both, there will always be duplicate images; for it would not be the case that the imaginative faculty of the one soul would be for objects of intellection, while that of the other was for sense-objects—that way there would be two living beings having nothing in common with each other.[99]

The idea of two souls with separate faculties of imagination and memory challenges the unity of the human being. If one ascribed memories of sense-perception to the one, and memories of thoughts to the other,[100] the living being would not be one. Therefore, the imaginations have to be in both souls.

---

96 See above p. 97.

97 Cf. IV 3 [27] 29, 22–24. On the faculty of imagination cf. p. 4, note 18.

98 Cf. IV 3 [27] 31, 1–2.

99 IV 3 [27] 31, 2–8 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Χωρὶς μὲν οὖν οὖσαι ἐχέτωσαν ἑκάτερα, ἐν δὲ τῷ αὐτῷ παρ' ἡμῖν πῶς τὰ δύο καὶ τίνι αὐτῶν ἐγγίνεται; Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἀμφοτέροις, διτταὶ ἀεὶ αἱ φαντασίαι· οὐ γὰρ δὴ τὸ μὲν τῆς ἑτέρας τῶν νοητῶν, τὸ δὲ τῶν αἰσθητῶν· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν παντάπασι δύο ζῷα οὐδὲν ἔχοντα κοινὸν πρὸς ἄλληλα ἔσται.

100 This is Warren's interpretation who distinguishes between "conceptual imagination" and "sensitive imagination" Warren 1966, pass., especially 280–281. This distinction is problematic (cf. Stock 2014, 101–102 and note 55).

> If, then, both souls have such a faculty, what will be the difference between them? And then, if so, how do we not discern such a difference? The answer is that, when the one soul agrees with the other, and the two faculties of imagination are not separate, and the higher one is dominant, the image becomes one, as if a shadow were following the other, or as if a weaker light were being subsumed into a stronger one.[101]

In the case of an agreement of the two souls, the higher one is dominant, and the imaginations of the lower one are not visible. "But whenever there is conflict and discord, then the other one manifests itself on its own account, while we do not realize that it is in a different faculty."[102] In the case of a discord, the other soul and its imaginations become noticeable as well, even though we do not realize that these come from the other soul.

Plotinus concludes:

> And in general the duality of the souls escapes our notice. For the two of them have come to be one thing, and the one of them rides dominant over the other. Now this other one has seen everything, and when it has gone out of the body, it keeps some of the things that pertain to the lower soul, and lets others go. It is like when we have at some time taken up associations with a lower class of person, and then change these companions for others, we remember a few things to do with the former, but more that pertain to the people who are better.[103]

Plotinus' comparison with the memories of better and worse friends suggests a solution to the issue of the two souls; instead of distinguishing two souls he speaks about two ways of remembering. Memories can tie the soul to the body, and the good soul is and should be "forgetful" of such memories.[104] But the way of remembering is even more important than the content of the memories:

---

101 IV 3 [27] 31, 8–13 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Εἰ οὖν ἀμφοτέραις, τίς ἡ διαφορά; Εἶτα πῶς οὐ γινώσκομεν; Ἢ ὅταν μὲν συμφωνῇ ἡ ἑτέρα τῇ ἑτέρᾳ, οὐκ ὄντων οὐδὲ χωρὶς τῶν φανταστικῶν, κρατοῦντός τε τοῦ τῆς κρείττονος, ἓν τὸ φάντασμα γίνεται, οἷον παρακολουθούσης σκιᾶς τῷ ἑτέρῳ, καὶ ὑποτρέχοντος οἷον σμικροῦ φωτὸς μείζονι·

102 IV 3 [27] 31, 13–14 (Dillon/Blumenthal): ὅταν δὲ μάχη ᾖ καὶ διαφωνία, ἐκφανὴς ἐφ' αὑτῆς καὶ ἡ ἑτέρα γίνεται, λανθάνει δὲ ⟨ὅ τι⟩ ἐν ἑτέρῳ.

103 IV 3 [27] 31, 15–20 (Dillon/Blumenthal): [ὅτι] Καὶ ὅλως τὸ διττὸν τῶν ψυχῶν λανθάνει. Εἰς ἓν γὰρ ἦλθον ἄμφω καὶ ἐποχεῖται ἡ ἑτέρα. Ἑώρα οὖν ἡ ἑτέρα πάντα καὶ τὰ μὲν ἔχει ἐξελθοῦσα, τὰ δ' ἀφίησι τῶν τῆς ἑτέρας· οἷον ἑταίρων ὁμιλίας φαυλοτέρων λαβόντες ποτὲ ἄλλους ἀλλαξάμενοι ὀλίγα τῶν ἐκείνων μεμνήμεθα, χρηστοτέρων δὲ γεγενημένων πλείω.

104 Cf. IV 3 [27] 32, 10–22. Cf. below p. 101.

Memories of the fatherland, wife and children are legitimate and acceptable, if they are *apathôs*, without *pathos*, without being affected, without passion or emotion.[105] As long as they are not connected to *pathos*, these memories do not connect the soul to the body. Then we also have to adapt the understanding of the higher and the lower soul:

> It is appropriate, after all, for the less good soul to aspire to the memory of the activities of the other, particularly when it is respectable itself; for a given soul could be better from the beginning, or become better by education received from the superior soul.[106]

A lower soul can be better or worse from the start and it can be improved by education through the higher soul. The higher soul, however, should attempt to turn away from the lower:

> But in any case that one should be glad to forget the things that come from the inferior; one may after all envisage the possibility that, even when the one soul is good, the other may be worse by its nature, while being forcibly restrained by the other.[107]

The lower soul should turn upwards, while the higher soul should not turn towards the lower, especially if this lower soul is not good itself. The distinction between the quality of the higher and that of the lower soul seems to introduce a split in the individual human being. How could a good higher soul be paired with a bad lower soul? The lower soul is not bad in a moral sense of a depraved soul, but bad in the sense of weak or of prone to give in to passions. The ethical value of the whole individual is determined by the quality of the higher soul, and this higher soul might be dealing with a better or worse lower soul, and it has to use more or less force accordingly. It will be, for instance, much harder to reach a calm state for someone who is prone to anger than for someone who has a calm temperament. The first one will have to be even more vigilant not to turn towards the lower soul and the memo-

105 Cf. IV 3 [27] 32, 1–4. On this passage see Stock 2014, 98–102; Stock 2024a (forthcoming).

106 IV 3 [27] 32, 6–9 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Πρέπει δὲ τὴν μὲν χείρονα καὶ τῶν τῆς ἑτέρας ἐνεργημάτων ἐφίεσθαι τῆς μνήμης καὶ μάλιστα, ὅταν ἀστεία ᾖ καὶ αὐτή· γένοιτο γὰρ ἄν τις καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀμείνων καὶ τῇ παιδεύσει τῇ παρὰ τῆς κρείττονος.

107 IV 3 [27] 32, 9–13 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Τὴν δὲ δεῖ ἀσμένως λήθην ἔχειν τῶν παρὰ τῆς χείρονος. Εἴη γὰρ ἂν καὶ σπουδαίας οὔσης τῆς ἑτέρας τὴν ἑτέραν τὴν φύσιν χείρονα εἶναι κατεχομένην ὑπὸ τῆς ἑτέρας βίᾳ.

ries connected to it than the second person. Consequently, Plotinus does not speak anymore about the memories of both souls, but only of that of the higher soul:

> And indeed to the extent that it strives upward it forgets more things—unless perhaps all its life even here was somehow such that it has memories only of better things. In this connection, the remark about 'standing apart from human concerns' is most apt: this necessarily comprises memories too. So that anyone saying that the good soul is forgetful would be right in this sort of way.[108]

The good soul has to be forgetful and turn away from all the memories that connect it to the embodied life since these memories hinder the ascent and the return to the higher realm. When Plotinus comes back to Heracles after these discussions about memory, it is obvious that the usage of this image has changed:

> For example, the Heracles we spoke of above would talk about his past brave deeds, but the other Heracles would think these things unimportant, and when he has been transferred to a holier place, and has come to be in the intelligible realm, and to a degree surpassing the other Heracles prevails in the contests in which the wise contend, … what will he say then?[109]

The first Heracles is the *eidôlon* Odysseus addresses while the second is the higher soul which does not compete in such battles anymore, but has moved on to a higher contest. Homer does not give us the answer as to what Heracles himself would say, since Odysseus only talks to the *eidôlon*. And Plotinus does not answer the questions either, as least not directly. He writes:

> And in general of what things will the soul retain memory when it is in the intelligible and comes to be in that Being? It would be logical to say that

108 IV 3 [27] 32, 13–18 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Ὅσῳ δὴ σπεύδει πρὸς τὸ ἄνω, πλειόνων αὐτῇ ἡ λήθη, εἰ μή που πᾶς ὁ βίος αὐτῇ καὶ ἐνταῦθα τοιοῦτος οἷος μόνων τῶν κρειττόνων εἶναι τὰς μνήμας· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐνταῦθα καλῶς τὸ ἐξιστάμενον τῶν ἀνθρωπείων σπουδασμάτων. Ἀνάγκη οὖν καὶ τῶν μνημονευμάτων· ὥστε ἐπιλήσμονα ἄν τις λέγων τὴν ἀγαθὴν ὀρθῶς ἂν λέγοι τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ.

109 IV 3 [27] 32, 24–IV 4 [28] 1, 1 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Καὶ εἴποι ἂν ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ἐκεῖνος ἀνδραγαθίας ἑαυτοῦ, ὁ δὲ καὶ ταῦτα σμικρὰ ἡγούμενος καὶ μετατεθεὶς εἰς ἁγιώτερον τόπον καὶ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ γεγενημένος καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἰσχύσας τοῖς ἄθλοις, οἷα ἀθλεύουσι σοφοί, τί οὖν ἐρεῖ;

> it contemplates the things there and is active in relation to things there among which it is, and that otherwise it would not be there.[110]

While in the intelligible realm, the soul cannot be involved in remembering, since the activity of intellection does not permit other mental activities to take place;[111] it cannot even remember itself.[112] However, the memories are not destroyed in the intelligible realm.[113] Plotinus reflects, for instance, on the good man's memories and suggests that he could have memories of this family and country in a dispassionate way (*apathôs*),[114] and he wonders about the effect of memories for the subsequent descent. Higher memories will prevent the soul from falling, but memories of lower things will promote its descent.[115] There is even something like unconscious memories which drag the soul down.[116] The soul, Plotinus claims, "becomes what it remembers":

> But when it has departed from there and is unable to bear the oneness, but has become attracted to a state of its own, wishing to be other than it was, and, as it were, poking its head out, it is in consequence of this, so it seems, that it acquires memory. The memory of the things there above continues to restrain it from falling, but that of things here carries it in this direction, while that of the things in the heavens holds it there, and, all in all, it is and becomes what it remembers.[117]

The soul becomes what it remembers.[118] This may at first sound as if the soul could not escape its past, but the soul is not meant to be passive, but should

---

110 IV 4 [28] 1, 1–4 (Dillon/Blumenthal): Καὶ τίνων τὴν μνήμην ἕξει ψυχὴ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἐκείνης γενομένη; Ἢ ἀκόλουθον εἰπεῖν ἐκεῖνα θεωρεῖν καὶ περὶ ἐκεῖνα ἐνεργεῖν, ἐν οἷς ἔστιν, ἢ μηδὲ ἐκεῖ εἶναι.

111 Cf. IV 4 [28] 1, 4–16.

112 Cf. IV 4 [28] 2, 1–11.

113 Gerson's statement that "the pyschological continuity of the endowed and ideal selves does not depend on memory" (Gerson 1994, 144) may have to be slightly modified.

114 Cf. IV 3 [27] 32, 1–6.

115 Cf. IV 4 [28] 3, 1–6. Cf. below note 117.

116 Cf. IV 4 [28] 4, 7–14. On this difficult passage cf. Blumenthal 1971a, 95, 97; Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 332–333; Hutchinson 2018, 72; Stock 2024a (forthcoming).

117 IV 4 [28] 3, 1–6 (Blumenthal/Dillon, slightly revised): Ἐξελθοῦσα δὲ ἐκεῖθεν καὶ οὐκ ἀνασχομένη τὸ ἕν, τὸ δὲ αὐτῆς ἀσπασαμένη καὶ ἕτερον ἐθελήσασα εἶναι καὶ οἷον προκύψασα, μνήμην, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐφεξῆς λαμβάνει. Μνήμη δὲ ἡ μὲν τῶν ἐκεῖ ἔτι κατέχει μὴ πεσεῖν, ἡ δὲ τῶν ἐνταῦθα ὠδὶ φέρει, ἡ δὲ τῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐκεῖ κατέχει, καὶ ὅλως, οὗ μνημονεύει, ἐκεῖνό ἐστι καὶ γίνεται.

118 Cf. Trouillard 2011, 38: "Dis-moi ce dont tu te souviens, et je te dirai qui tu es." Cf. also Blumenthal 1971a, 95n23; Brisson 2006, 23.

work actively on its memories—and on the way of remembering—in order to eliminate memories or ways of remembering that could be harmful to the soul.[119] And it should thus shape its memories and itself in a way that will lead to better lives and better embodiments.

Plotinus is dividing the human soul in such a way as to account for its functioning in this world while acknowledging its origin in the higher realm. He is thus thinking about mental functions, perception and memory especially. These functions cannot be associated with the highest psychic functions, but they belong to "us" insofar as "we" are not merely what "we truly are" in the higher realm, but insofar as "we" are beings in this world. And it is important for Plotinus not to neglect this aspect. "We" are not only "Heracles himself," but "we" are also the "shade," and the latter usage is not merely an imprecise everyday way of speaking, but its an important part of what "we" are—even though we are meant to transcend this level. This view takes into account what "we" are in the intelligible realm—our true home—and in the sensible realm, which is not our true home, but which is, nonetheless, an important part of our journey.

119 Cf. Stock 2024a (forthcoming).

CHAPTER 6

We Are Double

The previous chapter on consciousness had underlined the mobile focus of the "we," i.e. "our" ability to set "our" center on a lower or on a higher level, to descend or to ascend. In that sense "we" can be on many levels, lower and higher, "we" can fluctuate between levels and "we" can, if "we" manage to turn "our" focus to the intelligible realm, firmly ground ourselves in that higher realm. The treatises discussed in this chapter make a related, but different point. They describe "us" as double and thus underline how important it is to turn away from the lower way of being and turn towards the higher realm and become what "we" truly are.

1 Who Are We?

Treatise VI 4 [22] *On the presence of being, one and the same, everywhere as a whole*[1] contains important passages on the "we," and the discussions starts, as in IV 9 [8],[2] with the difficult idea of a unity of all souls. If all souls are one, "the individuality of souls seems to become problematic."[3] Since Plotinus wants to support the idea of the unity of all souls and the existence of individual souls, he has to explain how unity does not mean uniformity or identity, and this issue concerns both the soul (and different forms of soul) in one being and all the souls in the universe:

> Then how is it that the same soul is in the foot as in the hand, while the soul in this part of the universe is not the same as the soul in that part? If the perceptions are different, then we should note that the accompanying affections are different as well. Thus it is the objects being judged that are different, and not the one who judges. The one who judges is the very same judge, who is involved in different affections. Yet this judge is not the one who undergoes the affections: that is rather the nature of the

1 On VI 4–5 [22–23] cf. especially Tornau 1998; Emilsson and Strange 2015.
2 Cf. IV 9 [8], discussed above chapter II.2 (26–31).
3 Emilsson and Strange 2015, 195. Cf. also Gurtler 2008.

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_008

> qualified body. It is as if the same one of us were making judgments concerning a pleasure in our toe and a pain in our head.[4]

Plotinus says that the judge "in us" judges the different states of emotion in different parts of the body. *Hêmôn* seems to refer to human beings who have emotions and who have a judge, i.e. the rational soul, which judges these emotions. The different capacities, sight or sense of hearing do not have consciousness of what happens to the others, and they lack self-reflection, but the rational part possesses the appropriate consciousness.[5] The image of the judge underlines the unity of one being, despite the varieties of affections that come into play. Plotinus then comes to the question of how to explain the existence of individual souls: "But if soul is the same in every instance, how does each possess his own soul? And how is one soul good while another is bad?"[6] The doctrine of the unity of all souls seems to contradict the differences we apprehend in different human beings. His answer, which underlines the unity of all beings in one origin, leads to the question what "we"—*hêmeis*—are. "We" certainly conceive of ourselves as individuals and not as indistinguishably one with all the other souls. This individuality needs to be explained:

> But we—who are we? Are we that which draws near and comes to be in time? No, even before this coming to be came to be we were there, human beings who were different, and some of us even gods, pure souls and intellect united with the whole of reality; we were parts of the intelligible, not marked off or cut off but belonging to the whole; and we are not cut off even now. But now another human being, wishing to exist, approached that human being; and when he found us—for we were not outside the All—he wound himself round us and attached himself to that human being who was then each of us (as if there was one voice and one word and one here and another there turned their ears to it and heard and received it, and there came to be a hearing made actual, having that which acted on it present): and we have come to be the pair of them not

4 VI 4 [22] 6, 5–13 (Emilsson/Strange): Εἶτα πῶς ἐν ποδὶ καὶ χειρὶ τὴν αὐτήν, τὴν δὲ ἐν τῷδε τῷ μέρει τοῦ παντὸς οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν τῇ ἐν τῷδε; Εἰ δὲ αἱ αἰσθήσεις διάφοροι, καὶ τὰ πάθη τὰ συμπίπτοντα διάφορα λεκτέον εἶναι. Ἄλλα οὖν ἐστι τὰ κρινόμενα, οὐ τὸ κρῖνον· ὁ δὲ κρίνων ὁ αὐτὸς δικαστὴς ἐν ἄλλοις καὶ ἄλλοις πάθεσι γινόμενος· καίτοι οὐχ ὁ πάσχων αὐτός, ἀλλ' ἡ σώματος τοιοῦδε φύσις· καὶ ἔστιν οἷον εἰ αὐτὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ἡδονὴν κρίνει τὴν περὶ τὸν δάκτυλον καὶ ἀλγηδόνα τὴν περὶ τὴν κεφαλήν. Gurtler 2008, 117, however, translates *autos* as the "self" and *autos hêmôn* as "our self."

5 Cf. VI 4 [22] 6, 13–19.

6 VI 4 [22] 14, 1–2 (Emilsson/Strange, slightly revised): Ἀλλ' εἰ ἡ αὐτὴ ἑκασταχοῦ ψυχή, πῶς ἰδία ἑκάστου; Καὶ πῶς ἡ μὲν ἀγαθή, ἡ δὲ κακή;

> the one which we were before—and sometimes just the other one which we added on afterwards, when that prior one is inactive and in another way not present.[7]

"We" certainly comes out as a central notion, but it has a double meaning. There is a distinction between "we" before becoming and "we" in becoming. The first is a pure soul, which is never completely separated from the intelligible realm. But it does not remain in this pure state, it comes into becoming, and this means that a second human being is added to it, wrapped around it. After having come into becoming the "we" is composite, it is not only the higher level anymore. And if the higher is inactive, then "we" is only what was added. To be precise we should probably not say that the higher is inactive, but that its activity does not arrive at the center of the soul.

The distinction between a higher, original "we" and a later composite "we," which can, at times, even block out the higher original "we," defines human beings as belonging to two realms or as composites of two levels. There is one level, in every human being, which is part of the higher world, and a second level, which is lower, more connected to the sensible world. The image of the two human beings, the original being and the second who winds himself around the first, is a picture of the descent in which something is added to the original form. What is added is probably "the body with a trace (*ichnos*, *indalma*) of soul."[8] This, at least, would be in tune with Plato's image of the outer and the inner human being in the *Republic*, even though the inner human being in Plato is the rational soul whereas it seems to be even higher in Plotinus' case. However, how this human being, already endowed with a trace of soul, could approach the higher soul, is far from clear. What Plotinus wants to underline here, is that the lower reaches "for the higher rather than the higher descending to the lower;"[9] the descent is not due to any fault of the soul itself,

---

7 VI 4 [22], 14, 16–31 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ἡμεῖς δέ—τίνες δὲ ἡμεῖς; Ἆρα ἐκεῖνο ἢ τὸ πελάζον καὶ τὸ γινόμενον ἐν χρόνῳ; Ἢ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ταύτην τὴν γένεσιν γενέσθαι ἦμεν ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωποι ἄλλοι ὄντες καί τινες καὶ θεοί, ψυχαὶ καθαραὶ καὶ νοῦς συνημμένος τῇ ἁπάσῃ οὐσίᾳ, μέρη ὄντες τοῦ νοητοῦ οὐκ ἀφωρισμένα οὐδ' ἀποτετμημένα, ἀλλ' ὄντες τοῦ ὅλου· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ νῦν ἀποτετμήμεθα. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ νῦν ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ προσελήλυθεν ἄνθρωπος ἄλλος εἶναι θέλων· καὶ εὑρὼν ἡμᾶς—ἦμεν γὰρ τοῦ παντὸς οὐκ ἔξω—περιέθηκεν ἑαυτὸν ἡμῖν καὶ προσέθηκεν ἑαυτὸν ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ ὃς ἦν ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τότε· οἷον εἰ φωνῆς οὔσης μιᾶς καὶ λόγου ἑνὸς ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν παραθεὶς τὸ οὖς ἀκούσειε καὶ δέξαιτο, καὶ γένοιτο κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἀκοή τις ἔχουσα τὸ ἐνεργοῦν εἰς αὐτὴν παρόν· καὶ γεγενήμεθα τὸ συνάμφω καὶ οὐ θάτερον, ὃ πρότερον ἦμεν, καὶ θατέρον ποτε, ὃ ὕστερον προσεθέμεθα ἀργήσαντος τοῦ προτέρου ἐκείνου καὶ ἄλλον τρόπον οὐ παρόντος.

8 Emilsson and Strange 2015, 198.

9 Emilsson and Strange 2015, 199.

but comes as a consequence of the lower level's attempt. To descend is a loss of purity and unity because the soul gets involved with the body:

> Now the soul which comes from the divine was quiet, standing in itself according to its character; but the body, in a tumult because of its weakness, flowing away itself and battered by the blows from outside, first itself cried out to the community of the living thing and imparted its disturbance to the whole.[10]

Plotinus compares this situation to an assembly in which the elders are sitting quietly while the crowd requests food and brings unrest and chaos into the assembly.[11] As long as the reasonable people remain in charge, there is order, and the good reigns. But if the crowd prevails, the worse reigns. Similarly, the badness of a human being consists in a rule of lust and desires.[12]

> but whoever enslaves this mob, and runs back up to that one he once was, lives according to that human being and is that human being and gives what he gives to the body as something other than himself …[13]

Plotinus alludes to the aforementioned passage about a human being to whom another human being adds himself. Now, he is talking about the opposite movement, the separation from the second human being and the return to the first, to the higher, original "we." The person who achieves this return during life is still connected to the body, but only loosely. This is not the complete separation from the body, which only takes place at death, but the purification from the body Plato talks about in the *Phaedo*. Since such a soul is still connected to the body, it has to give something to the body to keep living. If the soul ignores all messages from the body, even those about basic needs, the human being would die—Plotinus does not recommend such a treatment of the body which could be described as a version of suicide. However, the soul should, as Plato requests in the *Phaedo*, distance itself as far as possible from the body. And Plotinus

10 VI 4 [22] 15, 18–23 (Armstrong): Ἡ μὲν δὴ ἐκ τοῦ θείου ψυχὴ ἥσυχος ἦν κατὰ τὸ ἦθος τὸ ἑαυτῆς ἐφ'ἑαυτῆς βεβῶσα, τὸ δὲ ὑπ' ἀσθενείας τὸ σῶμα θορυβούμενον καὶ ῥέον τε αὐτὸ καὶ πληγαῖς κρουόμενον ταῖς ἔξω, πρῶτον αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τοῦ ζῴου ἐφθέγγετο, καὶ τὴν αὑτοῦ ταραχὴν ἐδίδου τῷ ὅλῳ.

11 On this image cf. above p. 35, note 64.

12 Cf. VI 4 [22] 15, 23–35.

13 VI 4 [22] 15, 35–38 (Armstrong, slightly revised): ὃς δ' ἂν τοῦτον τὸν ὄχλον δουλώσηται καὶ ἀναδράμῃ εἰς ἐκεῖνον, ὅς ποτε ἦν, κατ' ἐκεῖνόν τε ζῇ καὶ ἔστιν ἐκεῖνος διδοὺς τῷ σώματι, ὅσα δίδωσιν ὡς ἑτέρῳ ὄντι ἑαυτοῦ·

describes this as giving its body what the body needs as if the body is "something other than himself." This soul does not consider the body as belonging to what "we" are, but as a different entity which is in its care and has to be treated in an adequate manner by nourishing it and keeping it alive, but nothing that comes from this body will affect the soul in any way.

There is, it seems, a conflict between the metaphysical description of the forthcoming of the soul and the field of ethics. On the one hand, Plotinus wants to maintain the unity and purity of the intelligible world; soul gives life to the sensible world, without being affected by it. On the other hand, he is concerned with ethical actions, that is with emotions and the soul's way of dealing with them, and with the self-formation of the soul. Both aspects are central for the question of how "we" are and how "we" define ourselves. If we take the metaphysical perspective, the lower functions of the soul are seen as an image, that is a lower, yet still positive, reflection of soul itself. They give life, sense-perceptions, passions and emotions, and all these functions are, as part of the image, an outflow of the soul. These functions belong to "us" insofar as "we" are human beings and living beings. The second perspective acknowledges the problematic effects of these lower functions of the soul. Affections and emotions, but also desires and even the vegetative functions influence human behavior and turn it away from rational thought and the intelligible realm. In this perspective, the lower functions appear as the opponent of rationality. There is a tension between these two perspectives, since the one underlines that the lower functions belong to "us" while the other encourages "us" to turn away from them. Yet the tension is in "us": "we" are not asked to distance ourselves only from the outside world, but from something that is part of what "we" are in a broad sense. This is a more difficult request since "we" have to understand what "our" true being is, where "we" truly belong and that "we" have to distance ourselves from something that somehow belongs to us so that "we" can become what "we" truly are.

2 The God in Us

In the second part of the treatise, in VI 5 [23], after his "digression into ethics and psychology"[14] in chapters 14 to 16 of VI 4 [22], Plotinus comes back to the question of how being can be one and the same everywhere. He writes:

14 Tornau 1998, 320 (my translation). Cf. Emilsson and Strange 2015: "an ethical and eschatological standpoint."

> A common conception says that there really is such a thing as being one and the same in number simultaneously present as a whole everywhere: everyone is spontaneously moved to say that the god present in each of us is one and the same.[15]

Plotinus appeals to "a common conception"[16] that there is something divine in us, attempts to give a metaphysical explanation of this conviction and explains how discursive reasoning can reach this idea as well.[17] Plotinus explains his intuition by alluding to a fragment of Euripides which identifies our intellect with the "god in us": *ho nous gar hêmôn estin en hekastô(i) theos*.[18] Plotinus goes one step further and explains this "god in us" does not refer to individual and separate intellects, but to the fact that all our intellects are one—and this, Plotinus thinks, a conviction "our souls" possess.[19] He concludes:

> But if it is being and is in being, then for each of us it would be in himself. Therefore we have not departed from being, but are in it. Nor has it departed from us. Therefore all things are one.[20]

The unity of all beings is the basis for the ascent.

> Indeed, both we and what belongs to us are referred back to being, and we reach up to that level and the first thing that comes from it, and we think those objects without having images or impressions of them. But if we do not have images or impressions of them, we think them by being them. So if we participate in true knowledge, we are those objects, not by taking them into ourselves, but rather by ourselves being in them.[21]

---

15 VI 5 [23] 1, 1–4 (Emilsson/Strange): Τὸ ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν ἀριθμῷ πανταχοῦ ἅμα ὅλον εἶναι κοινὴ μέν τις ἔννοιά φησιν εἶναι, ὅταν πάντες κινούμενοι αὐτοφυῶς λέγωσι τὸν ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν θεὸν ὡς ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτόν.

16 Emilsson and Strange 2015, 214.

17 See Tornau 1998, 321–322.

18 Euripides, fr. 1018: ὁ νοῦς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐστιν ἐν ἑκάστῳ θεός. Cf. Nauck 1964; Tornau 1998, 323; Stock 2020, 53; 99.

19 VI 5 [23] 1, 9 (Emilsson/Strange): αἱ ψυχαὶ ἡμῶν.

20 VI 5 [23] 1, 24–26 (Emilsson/Strange): Εἰ δὲ ὂν καὶ ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἐκεῖνο, ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἂν εἴη ἑκάστῳ. Οὐκ ἀπέστημεν ἄρα τοῦ ὄντος, ἀλλ' ἐσμὲν ἐν αὐτῷ, οὐδ' αὖ ἐκεῖνο ἡμῶν· ἓν ἄρα πάντα τὰ ὄντα.

21 VI 5 [23] 7, 1–6 (Emilsson/Strange): Ἀνάγεται γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς τὸ ὄν, καὶ ἀναβαίνομέν τε εἰς ἐκεῖνο καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἀπ' ἐκείνου, καὶ νοοῦμεν ἐκεῖνα οὐκ εἴδωλα αὐτῶν οὐδὲ τύπους ἔχοντες. Εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτο, ὄντες ἐκεῖνα. Εἰ οὖν ἀληθινῆς ἐπιστήμης μετέχομεν, ἐκεῖνά ἐσμεν οὐκ ἀπολαβόντες αὐτὰ ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς ἐν ἐκείνοις ὄντες.

The activity of pure thought is described as an identification with the objects of thought: "we think them by being them" and so "we" "are those objects" when he have knowledge. "We" are not always identical to these objects of thought, but "we" can become these objects by "ourselves being in them." This ascent is possible because it is a return to our origin.[22] However, the unity of all souls remains difficult to grasp for the souls, and Plotinus tries to explain this unity by the usage of an image: "Yet since we look outward from the point where we are attached to them, we are unaware that we are one, like faces that are on the outside many but have but a single head on the inside."[23] Like the image of the dance in VI 9 [9],[24] this image shows that the soul does not lose its connection to the origin, but that it is only aware of the connection when it turns towards it.

This treatise presents the ideal of the sage who is turning his attention away from the body. He barely considers himself as a living being. He does not neglect the body, but gives it only what it needs, so that the soul can be by itself. Plotinus is clearly following the lesson from Plato's *Phaedo* that what "we" truly are is the soul. We have seen that the body plays a more important role in other treatises, but this is, I argue, not a contradiction, but the consequence of Plotinus' change of focus in different treatises. When Plotinus is interested in the lower function of soul, "we" are a living being or a human being. Here, however he is more in the ethical aspect and in the ascent. What "we" think "we" are when "we" try to ascend is not the same as the "we" in the sensible world which is a "we" that is trying to explain and understand itself and its role in this world. If the focus is the ascent, then "we" should stop understanding ourselves in the broader sense of a living being, but focus on what constitutes our highest part and turn towards the higher realm.

3 We and the Image of the Soul

Treatise II 1 [40] *On the Heaven* repeatedly refers to "us" in order to explain circumstances in the cosmos. These passages gives us a picture of "us" as human beings, living beings, but also as the higher soul.

Plotinus asks in chapter 3 why the body, which is changing constantly, is not an impediment to the immortality of the heaven. It is, says Plotinus, in flux,

22 Cf. Tornau 2010; Tornau 2009, 352.

23 VI 5 [23] 7, 9–11 (Emilsson/Strange): "Ἐξω μὲν οὖν ὁρῶντες ἢ ὅθεν ἐξήμμεθα ἀγνοοῦμεν ἓν ὄντες, οἷον πρόσωπα [πολλὰ] εἰς τὸ ἔξω πολλά, κορυφὴν ἔχοντα εἰς τὸ εἴσω μίαν.

24 Cf. VI 9 [9] 8, 38–9, 2.

but it does not flow out of itself; the earth remains the same in size and matter.[25] He shows that this is not improbable through a comparison with human beings:

> With us too, though parts of us change and go away outside us, each individual lasts a long time; and when something has no outside, the nature of body is not so discordant with the soul as to prevent it being one and the same everlasting living thing.[26]

The notion "us" refers to human beings as living being whose body or materiality changes over time, but which remains for as long as this specific living being. In a corporeal being the conflict between body and soul, or rather the dispersing tendency of the body, causes the finite nature of the being. This means, in other words, that "our parts," i.e. the parts of "our" body, cannot keep their form on their own.[27] They need the soul's power to be united into one living being, but even the soul's power cannot hold them together forever. Thus, living beings are mortal as opposed to heaven. The reason Plotinus advances for this difference comes from Plato's *Timaeus* where heaven is said to be created by God, whereas the things on the lower level are crafted by the lesser gods.[28] The heavenly soul comes directly after the demiurge, and so do "our souls,"[29] but the latter have to work in a lower space and with worse material; thus the bodies cannot be perpetual as the higher, better bodies.[30] While everything in this sublunary world is mortal, everything in heaven is immortal:

> We, however, are formed by the soul given from the gods in heaven and heaven itself, and this soul governs our association with our bodies. The other soul, by which we are we, is cause of our well-being, not of our being.

---

25 Cf. II 1 [40] 3, 1–9.

26 II 1 [40] 3, 9–12 (Armstrong): Καὶ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀεὶ μεταβαλλόντων μορίων καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔξω ἀπιόντων μένει ἕκαστος εἰς πολύ· ᾧ δὲ ἔξω μηδέν, οὐκ ἀσύμφωνος ἂν τούτων ἡ σώματος φύσις πρὸς ψυχὴν πρὸς τὸ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι ζῷον καὶ ἀεὶ μένον.

27 Cf. II 1 [40] 3, 23–25. *Hêmetera merê* (24).

28 Cf. II 1 [40] 5, 1–5, referring to Plato, *Tim.* 69c.

29 II 1 [40] 5, 5–8 (Armstrong): "This amounts to saying that the heavenly soul (and our souls too) comes next in order after the maker of the universe; from the heavenly soul comes out an image of it and so to speak flows down from above and makes the living things on earth."

30 Cf. II 1 [40] 5, 8–17.

> It comes when our body is already in existence, making only minor contributions from reasoning to our being.[31]

"We," as living beings, are formed by the soul that comes from the heaven and that connects "us" to our bodies. But "we" are not merely living beings, but are also shaped by "the other soul, by which we are we" (*kath' hên hêmeis*) which takes over a body which is already made, animated and equipped with the lower functions.[32] The idea of a first psychic preparation of the body by nature or the world-soul, which is then followed by an overtaking of this living body by the higher individual soul, can be found in other treatises as well.[33] According to this theory, the individual soul is not directly responsible for the vivification of the body, which is the world-soul's task. This theory has two major consequences. First of all, all living beings are united as products of the world-soul, which makes clear that human beings are living beings, just like plants and animals, equally a part of the living world. Secondly, however, a consequence of this theory seems to be to split up the living being in two parts, the living body and the higher soul. The higher soul is presumably the rational soul. The lower functions, including the vegetative, but also passions and emotions, would not come from this particular individual soul, but from nature in general. This leads to the consequence that, to a certain degree, all these passions and emotions are not really mine, it is merely what happens to be in the soul or image of the soul that was connected to the body, which merely happens now to be my body.[34] "My" task will only be to handle these passions and emotions in the best possible manner, to form and shape them so that they do not hinder my rational ascent. In other treatises, Plotinus seems much more willing to see emotions and even the body as belonging to "us,"[35] but here, "we" seems to be mostly on the level of rational thought. This treatise thus underlines our "double character." On the one hand, "we" are a living being, on the other hand "we" are what "we truly are."

---

31 II 1 [40] 5, 18–23 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Ἡμεῖς δὲ πλασθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς διδομένης παρὰ τῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ θεῶν ψυχῆς καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατ' ἐκείνην καὶ σύνεσμεν τοῖς σώμασιν· ἡ γὰρ ἄλλη ψυχή, καθ' ἣν ἡμεῖς, τοῦ εὖ εἶναι, οὐ τοῦ εἶναι αἰτία. Ἤδη γοῦν τοῦ σώματος ἔρχεται γενομένου μικρὰ ἐκ λογισμοῦ πρὸς τὸ εἶναι συλλαμβανομένη.

32 Cf. Wilberding 2006, 185.

33 Cf. for instance IV 9 [8] 3, 23–29; VI 7 [38] 7, 8–16. Cf. also Armstrong 1979a, 60; Remes 2008b, 105; Kalligas 2012, 155–158, 162; Dillon 2013, 77–78, 82; Karfík 2014, 124, 127. Cf. p. 5, note 28.

34 Cf. p. 5, note 28, on the image of the soul.

35 Cf. chapter VIII on treatise I 1 [53] (125–146).

4 The Passions and We

The late treatise II 3 [52][36] further develops the idea of "our" double character. At the beginning Plotinus refers to his earlier investigation of the effect of the stars, that "the course of the stars indicates what is going to happen in particular cases, but does not itself cause everything."[37] The first question to be discussed when treating this topic again is whether the stars are ensouled or not.[38] If they are not ensouled, "they will have nothing to offer but heat or cold—if we assume that some of the stars are cold; however that may be, they will determine our given destiny only in our bodily nature, since there is a corporeal transference from them to us."[39] In this case their influence would be insignificant and could not explain why it would make some human beings wise and others dumb, some artists, some rich, some poor, and why something happens to someone at a certain moment.[40] "Us" clearly refers to psychophysical human beings as Plotinus says that the corporeal effect of the stars would not be enough to explain effects on human beings, their actions, thought and character. When Plotinus discusses the second alternative according to which stars are ensouled, "we" denotes psychophysical beings as well.

> But if they have souls and act with conscious purpose, what have we done to them to make them deliberately injure us, these beings which are set in a divine region and are divine themselves? They do not have what makes human beings evil, nor does any good or evil to them result from our happiness or suffering.[41]

If the stars are ensouled they cannot be affected by human actions as they are divine, and they cannot harm human beings with design since they are divine and thus of good nature. They cannot be influenced by "us," and their life can have no influence on "us" human and ethical beings.[42] A little later, however,

---

36 Cf. Kalligas 2014, 277–304.

37 II 3 [52] 1, 1–2 (Armstrong).

38 Cf. II 3 [52] 2, 1–2.

39 II 3 [52] 2, 2–5 (Armstrong).

40 Cf. II 3 [52] 2, 5–16.

41 II 3 [52] 2, 16–21 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Εἰ δ' ἔμψυχα ὄντα προαιρέσει ποιεῖ, τί παρ' ἡμῶν παθόντα κακὰ ἡμᾶς ποιεῖ ἑκόντα, καὶ ταῦτα ἐν θείῳ τόπῳ ἱδρυμένα καὶ αὐτὰ θεῖα ὄντα; Οὐδὲ γάρ, δι' ἃ ἄνθρωποι γίγνονται κακοί, ταῦτα ἐκείνοις ὑπάρχει, οὐδέ γε ὅλως γίνεται ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν αὐτοῖς ἡμῶν ἢ εὐπαθούντων ἢ κακὰ πασχόντων.

42 Cf. II 3 [52] 3, 21–28; II 3 [52] 4, 8–9; II 3 [52] 5, 1–4; II 3 [52] 5, 11–15; II 3 [52] 5, 18–19; II 3 [52] 12, 12–18.

Plotinus seems to identify "us" and the soul: "We, however, do the works of soul according to nature, as long as we do not fail in the multiplicity of the All; if we fail we have as just penalty both the failure itself and the being in a worse position afterwards."[43] The one who acts is both the living being and the soul, but the one paying the penalty is the soul who will find itself in a worse place. The soul—as "we"—is envisioned as a fallible entity: it can choose the right path, but it can also fail. This soul is clearly not an impassible soul, as a passage shows where Plotinus refers to Plato's *Timaeus*:[44]

> And in the Timaeus the God who makes the world gives the 'first principle of the soul,' but the gods who are borne through the heavens 'the terrible and inevitable passions,' 'angers' and desires and 'pleasures and pains,' and the 'other kind of soul,' from which come passions of this kind. These statements bind us to the stars, from which we get our souls, and subject us to necessity when we come down here; from them we get our moral characters, our characteristic actions, and our emotions, coming from a disposition which is liable to emotion.[45]

In other texts, Plotinus says that we get the lower form of the soul from the world-soul.[46] Here, however, following Plato's *Timaeus*, he considers another origin for the "other soul" from which stem passions and affections: The stars give "us" the soul and "our moral characters," the way "we" act and "we" feel. Plotinus even speaks of necessity. This leads to the question:

> So what is left which is 'we'? Surely, just that which we really are, we to whom nature gave power to master our passions. Yes, and God gave us too, in the midst of all these evils which we receive through the body, 'virtue which is without a master.' For we do not need virtue when we are in peace but when there is a risk of being in evils if virtue is not there.[47]

---

43 II 3 [52] 8, 9–12 (Armstrong): Ἡμεῖς δὲ ψυχῆς ἔργα κατὰ φύσιν ποιοῦμεν, ἕως μὴ ἐσφάλημεν ἐν τῷ πλήθει τοῦ παντός· σφαλέντες δὲ ἔχομεν δίκην καὶ τὸ σφάλμα αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ ἐν χείρονι μοίρᾳ εἰς ὕστερον.

44 Plato, *Tim*. 69c5–d3.

45 II 3 [52] 9, 6–14 (Armstrong): Ἔν τε Τιμαίῳ θεὸς μὲν ὁ ποιήσας τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ψυχῆς δίδωσιν, οἱ δὲ φερόμενοι θεοὶ τὰ δεινὰ καὶ ἀναγκαῖα πάθη, θυμοὺς καὶ ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας αὖ, καὶ ψυχῆς ἄλλο εἶδος, ἀφ' οὗ τὰ παθήματα ταυτί. Οὗτοι γὰρ οἱ λόγοι συνδέουσιν ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἄστροις παρ' αὐτῶν ψυχὴν κομιζομένους καὶ ὑποτάττουσι τῇ ἀνάγκῃ ἐνταῦθα ἰόντας· καὶ ἤθη τοίνυν παρ' αὐτῶν καὶ κατὰ τὰ ἤθη πράξεις καὶ πάθη ἀπὸ ἕξεως παθητικῆς οὔσης·

46 Cf. p. 30; 96.

47 II 3 [52] 9, 14–19 (Armstrong, slightly revised): ὥστε τί λοιπὸν ἡμεῖς; Ἢ ὅπερ ἐσμὲν κατ' ἀλή-

"We" are more than what is subject to the effect of the stars and bound by necessity, more than passions and dispositions of character. That what "we really are (*kat'alêtheian hêmeis*)," "we" in a strict, pure sense is what can reign over the *pathê*, the passions and affections.[48] "We" clearly denotes the ethical subject. The ethical context is suggested both by a reference to the choice of lives in the myth of Er ("virtue which is without a master")[49] and by allusions to the *Theaetetus*:

> So we must 'fly from here' and 'separate' ourselves from what has been added to us, and not be the composite thing, the ensouled body in which the nature of body (which has some trace of soul) has the greater power, so that the common life belongs more to the body; for everything that pertains to this common life is bodily.[50]

Plotinus seizes the motif of the flight in Plato's *Theaetetus*, the idea that the soul turns towards true being as if it is fleeing from the sensible world.[51] "We" should strive not to be the ensouled body, the composite, but to turn away from the bodily realm and become pure souls. The body is not devoid of soul, but it only has a trace of the soul, and "we" should not settle on this level.

> But to the other soul, which is outside the body, belongs the ascent to the higher world, to the fair and divine which no one masters, but either makes use of it that he may be it and live by it, withdrawing himself; or else he is bereft of this higher soul and lives under destiny, and then the stars do not only show him signs but he also becomes himself a part, and follows along with the whole of which he is a part.[52]

θειαν ἡμεῖς, οἷς καὶ κρατεῖν τῶν παθῶν ἔδωκεν ἡ φύσις. Καὶ γὰρ ὅμως ἐν τούτοις τοῖς κακοῖς διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἀπειλημμένοις ἀδέσποτον ἀρετὴν θεὸς ἔδωκεν. Οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἡσύχῳ οὖσιν ἀρετῆς δεῖ ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ὅταν κίνδυνος ἐν κακοῖς εἶναι ἀρετῆς οὐ παρούσης.

48 Cf. O'Daly 1973, 45.

49 Plato, *Rep*. 617e3.

50 II 3 [52] 9, 19–24 (Armstrong): Διὸ καὶ φεύγειν ἐντεῦθεν δεῖ καὶ χωρίζειν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν προσγεγενημένων καὶ μὴ τὸ σύνθετον εἶναι σῶμα ἐψυχωμένον ἐν ᾧ κρατεῖ μᾶλλον ἡ σώματος φύσις ψυχῆς τι ἴχνος λαβοῦσα, ὡς τὴν ζωὴν τὴν κοινὴν μᾶλλον τοῦ σώματος εἶναι· πάντα γὰρ σωματικά, ὅσα ταύτης.

51 Cf. Plato, *Theat*. 176a8–b1.

52 II 3 [52] 9, 24–30 (Armstrong): Τῆς δὲ ἑτέρας τῆς ἔξω ἡ πρὸς τὸ ἄνω φορὰ καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ θεῖον ὧν οὐδεὶς κρατεῖ, ἀλλ' ἢ προσχρῆται, ἵν' ᾖ ἐκεῖνο καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ζῇ ἀναχωρήσας· ἢ ἔρημος ταύτης τῆς ψυχῆς γενόμενος ζῇ ἐν εἱμαρμένῃ, καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὰ ἄστρα αὐτῷ οὐ μόνον σημαίνει, ἀλλὰ γίνεται αὐτὸς οἷον μέρος καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ συνέπεται, οὗ μέρος.

Human beings can choose between two ways of life; on the one hand, they can get closer to the divine and the beautiful insofar as they are the "other soul," which is not linked to the body; on the other hand they can live their lives determined by fate when they separate themselves from the higher soul and turn towards a bodily life. Plotinus concludes:

> For everyone is double, one of him is the sort of compound being and one of him is himself; and the whole universe is, one part the composite of body and a sort of soul bound to body, and one the soul of the All which is not in body but makes a trace of itself shine on that which is in body.[53]

Everyone (*hekastos*) is double: on the one hand the *synamphoteron*, i.e. the being of soul or rather trace of the soul and body, on the other hand *autos*, "himself," i.e. the higher soul. This duality is, however, not a mere unchangeable fact. The soul has to put the higher soul in charge and become master of itself, govern the lower parts and rise to be not the compound, but the higher soul.

---

53 II 3 [52] 9, 30–34 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Διττὸς γὰρ ἕκαστος, ὁ μὲν τὸ συναμφότερόν τι, ὁ δὲ αὐτός· καὶ πᾶς ὁ κόσμος δὲ ὁ μὲν τὸ ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς τινος δεθείσης σώματι, ὁ δὲ ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ψυχὴ ἡ μὴ ἐν σώματι, ἐλλάμπουσα δὲ ἴχνη τῇ ἐν σώματι·

CHAPTER 7

We Philosophers

The presentation of Plotinus' usage of the term *hêmeis* in the *Enneads* has shown the variety and subtlety of its meanings. It can denote the living being, the soul in its entirety, the rational soul, the soul in the intelligible realm, the ethical subject, the center of consciousness. This chapter will focus on one last additional meaning, which has been alluded to, but which deserves a separate treatment, since it stands at the center of Plotinus' idea of philosophizing: *hêmeis* as "we philosophers."[1] Very often he uses the term to distance himself from other philosophers, either earlier thinkers or those who support opposing theories.[2] Furthermore, it can refer to Plotinus and his disciples. He points to characteristics of human knowledge and especially its limitations and weaknesses;[3] he announces how he wants to proceed and what he wants to do as a next step in the discussion; he includes his listeners into the "we" and shows them that he wants to go through the discussion with them.[4] This usage of the first person plural is a pedagogical tool all of us who teach often use when we try to make our students take part in the investigative development of ideas: "What do we mean when we say …?" This way of speaking is meant to encourage the listeners or the readers to take part in the act of philosophizing, not to remain a passive recipient of a piece of wisdom, but an active part in the act of philosophizing.

1 Cf. Corrigan and Turner 2017, 134: "As so often (see for example III.8.1., 1ff.), Plotinus' writings starts with 'us,' the members of his seminar—his philosophical friends and acquaintances—and, more broadly, the 'us' of all philosophical addressees who 'overhear' this dialogue. The 'we' for Plotinus is not our contemporary 'ego' or even 'self' and not yet 'person' in any modern sense, but a dialogical Platonic forerunner of something like a community of selves." Cf. Stang 2016, 199.

2 In addition to the passages quoted below see especially IV 8 [6]. Cf. also III 6 [26] 11, 4; 11, 7; VI 6 [34] 16, 8; 16, 12; II 7 [37] 1, 43; 2, 4; II 1 [40] 7, 23; 7, 30; 7, 33; VI 1 [42] 1, 5; VI 2 [43] 1, 4–5; III 7 [45] 1, 15; 10, 10; 13, 13; 13, 16.

3 Cf. especially IV 9 [8] 5, 26–28; II 6 [17] 1, 43, 1, 47; V 7 [18] 3, 12; VI 4 [22] 2, 27; I 4 [46] 15, 10; III 2 [47] 11, 9–12.

4 Cf. IV 9 [8] 4, 6–8 (prayer to god); II 4 [12], 4, 1; VI 4 [22] 1, 30; 3, 27; 4, 21; VI 5 [23] 5, 21; 7, 7; V 6 [24] 1, 21; III 6 [26] 1, 12; IV 3 [27] 11, 15; 21, 8; 21, 18; 27, 1–3; IV 4 [28], 8, 60 (*logos hêmin*); 30, 17; 30, 22; 31, 23; 36, 17; 37, 6; VI 6 [34] 10, 48; 10, 50; VI 8 [39] 3, 10; 8, 1; 11, 17; 15, 7; 15, 32; II 1 [40] 1, 16; IV 6 [41] 2, 6; VI 1 [42] 4, 53; 6, 22; 6, 29; 6, 31; 6, 34; 6, 36; 7, 8–10; 7,13; 14, 7; 14, 24; VI 2 [43] 3, 23; 3, 26; 4, 29; 7, 44; 12, 4; 17, 4; VI 3 [44] 1, 8; 6, 7; 9, 39; 13, 21; 20, 15; III 7 [45] 4, 32; 6, 20; 6, 22; 7, 15; 7, 17; I 4 [46] 3, 1; 3, 17; 3, 32; 9, 8; 11, 16; III 5 [50] 8, 1–5; I 8 [51] 2, 10, 6, 47.

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_009

The beginning of treatise IV 8 [6] *On the descent of the soul* offers insight into Plotinus' conception of philosophy. The beginning is justifiably famous as Plotinus speaks of the union with the intellect and his re-descent into the body in the first person singular:

> I often wake up from my body into myself, so that being within myself and outside all other things I enjoy a vision of wonderful beauty. It is then that I believe most firmly that I am part of the nobler realm, living a life of perfect activity; I have become at one with the divine, and being securely established in it I have entered into that higher actuality, setting myself above all the rest of the intelligible world.[5]

After this unusually personal beginning,[6] Plotinus gives an overview of philosophical positions on the connection of body and soul. Heraclitus, he writes, "urged us to enquire into this question," that is the reasons of the descent of the soul; Plotinus cites passages in which Heraclitus speaks of "necessary changes," "repose" and "weariness."[7] Heraclitus was speaking in images (*eikazein*) and not openly and clearly (*saphê*), but this is an advantage for "us":

> He left us to make our own conjectures, since he chose not to make his argument clear to us—perhaps because a person must search within himself, just as he found the answer by searching it out by himself.[8]

Plotinus does not condemn Heraclitus' lack of clarity, but he interprets it positively as an encouragement to search for "us." The same is true for other early philosophers. With his ideas on banishment and exile[9] Empedocles has revealed as much as Pythagoras and his followers who also spoke in riddles (*êinittonto*); his "lack of clarity is also due to the fact that he writes in verse (*tô*

5 IV 8 [6] 1, 1–7 (Fleet, slightly revised): Πολλάκις ἐγειρόμενος εἰς ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ γινόμενος τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἔξω, ἐμαυτοῦ δὲ εἴσω, θαυμαστὸν ἡλίκον ὁρῶν κάλλος, καὶ τῆς κρείττονος μοίρας πιστεύσας τότε μάλιστα εἶναι, ζωήν τε ἀρίστην ἐνεργήσας καὶ τῷ θείῳ εἰς ταὐτὸν γεγενημένος καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἱδρυθεὶς εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἐλθὼν ἐκείνην ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ἄλλο νοητὸν ἐμαυτὸν ἱδρύσας. On this passage cf. also O'Meara 1974 with a different translation and interpretation: *pollakis* modifying not the participles, but the main verb (*apôrô*, l. 8).

6 Cf. p. 79, note 2.

7 IV 8 [6] 1, 11–17 (Fleet). Cf. regarding the passages in Heraclitus, references and the way Plotinus integrates them Lavaud 2002, 252–253, note 3; D'Ancona 2003, 137–139; Fleet 2012, 78–81.

8 IV 8 [6] 1, 15–17 (Fleet): ἀμελήσας σαφῆ ἡμῖν ποιῆσαι τὸν λόγον, ὡς δέον ἴσως παρ' αὑτῷ ζητεῖν, ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτὸς ζητήσας εὗρεν.

9 Cf. Lavaud 2002, 253, note 5.

parên kai dia poiêsin ou saphei einai)."[10] Imagery and indirection are aspects of philosophy's protreptic and inaugural modes: they encourage us to philosophize, and we will philosophize at least at the outset by thinking about the riddle or image.

This idea fits Plotinus' conception of philosophy. The goal is not to transfer a set of knowledge, preferably in simple formula, but to encourage self-thinking, which alone can be successful. Help is possible, but no one can reach knowledge who does not undertake the difficult task of thinking for themselves. The addressee of this encouragement is "we," "we philosophers," i.e. Plotinus and his disciples and then everyone who wants to follow his thought.

In what follows, Plotinus opposes Plato to these authors who encourage their readers to search through their imagery and their poetic way of speaking:

> We are left with the divine Plato, who has said in many places in his works many noble things about the soul and its arrival here, so that we can hope for some clarity from him.[11]

There is hope of clarity in Plato for "us," but it is only partially fulfilled. Although Plotinus praises Plato's clarity in his talk about the soul he has to take into account that it is not easy to discern his intention.[12] On the one hand, Plato denigrates the sensible world and the body, on the other hand, he praises the sensible cosmos.[13] Plotinus' reaction to this perceived contradiction is to develop a reading which combines these two elements.[14] At first, he has to discuss the soul's companionship with the body:

> So that once we have sought to learn about our own soul from Plato, we find we are obliged to grapple with a search about soul in general. How on earth is it in the nature of soul to associate with body?[15]

The citations from Plato and the introduction to the treatise show that Plotinus is mainly interested in the human soul, in "our soul." But he can only answer his

10 IV 8 [6] 1, 20–23 (Fleet). Cf. D'Ancona 2003, 14–15.

11 IV 8 [6] 1, 23–26 (Fleet): Λείπεται δὴ ἡμῖν ὁ θεῖος Πλάτων, ὃς πολλά τε καὶ καλὰ περὶ ψυχῆς εἶπε περί τε ἀφίξεως αὐτῆς πολλαχῇ εἴρηκεν ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῦ λόγοις, ὥστε ἐλπίδα ἡμῖν εἶναι λαβεῖν παρ' αὐτοῦ σαφές τι.

12 Cf. IV 8 [6] 1, 26–28.

13 Cf. IV 8 [6] 1, 29–50. Cf. D'Ancona 2003, 143–148.

14 Cf. Stock 2016a.

15 IV 8 [6] 2, 1–4 (Fleet): Ὥστε ἡμῖν συμβαίνει περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ μαθεῖν ζητήσασιν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐφάπτεσθαι καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς ὅλως ζητῆσαι, πῶς ποτε κοινωνεῖν σώματι πέφυκε.

question in the context of reflections on the world-soul and soul itself. "We" are trying to undertake this investigation with Plato's help and with that of other philosophers. "We" are therefore philosophers who strive for knowledge and who can be distinguished from other earlier philosophers who were engaged in the search as well.

Many other treatises raise the topic of a search for knowledge as a path, for instance I 6 [1], V 9 [5], I 3 [20] and I 1 [53]. Plotinus' first treatise *On beauty* (I 6 [1]) addresses readers and listeners and encourages them to ascend themselves. At the outset, the text seems a treatise, but then turns into a travel report which shows the way to those who want to walk the way of self-purification and ascent.[16] In I 6 [1] this topic is discussed in the form of a direct and indirect encouragement of the reader. Plotinus does not use the word "we," but he writes "We will set sail as did Odysseus"[17] which includes the reader even without the stressed *hêmeis*; once he speaks of "our homeland" and "our father."[18] Treatises V 9 [5] and I 3 [20] make the encouragement to "us" more explicit. In later treatises, especially in I 1 [53], this connection comes to full bloom.

In the first chapter of V 9 [5] Plotinus compares different kinds of human beings with birds; the species are distinguished by the degree of their ability to separate themselves from the earthly realm and turn towards their fatherland. Plotinus probably refers to Epicureans, Stoics and Platonists.[19] Then he asks: "What, then, is this place? And how could one reach it?"[20] The questions recall similar questions in treatises I 1 [6] and I 3 [20]; again Plotinus is interested in the ascent, in who can perform it and how it can be initiated. As in I 6 [1] Plotinus uses sensible beauty as a tool for the ascent. Then he writes that the beauty in the soul comes from reason which the soul receives from the intellect which is beautiful in itself.[21]

> Should we then stop at Intellect as the First, or must we go beyond Intellect, and does Intellect stand from our point of view in front of the first principle, as if in the porch of the Good, proclaiming to us all that is in it, like an impression of it in greater multiplicity while the Good remains altogether in one?[22]

16 Cf. Stock 2013.

17 I 6 [1] 8, 17–18 (Smith).

18 I 6 [1] 8, 21 (Smith). Cf. Stock 2013.

19 Cf. V 9 [5] 1, 1–21. Cf. Vorwerk 2001, 59–72; Schniewind 2007, 89–97.

20 V 9 [5] 2, 1–2 (Armstrong, slightly revised): Τίς οὖν οὗτος ὁ τόπος; Καὶ πῶς ἄν τις εἰς αὐτὸν ἀφίκοιτο;

21 Cf. V 9 [5] 2, 20–23.

22 V 9 [5] 2, 23–27 (Armstrong): Καὶ πότερον δὴ ἐνταῦθα δεῖ στῆναι ὡς πρῶτον, ἢ καὶ νοῦ ἐπέκεινα

The intellect is not just potentially intellect, it is itself what it thinks.[23] "We" are a different case: "But it is our habit, derived from the things in our world, to separate the things of that higher world in our conceptions of them."[24] "We" seems to refer to the rational soul which uses its usual method towards the intellect, a method it uses regarding "the things in our world," i.e. in the sensible realm, outside of the intellect. This discursive soul—"we"—cannot grasp the simplicity and unity of the intellect.[25] As the ascent to the intellect is the goal of thought, philosophy has to overcome this gap; "we," the rational soul, have to leave the method of distinction behind and reach a higher union. But this is only possible if the soul belongs to this higher, intelligible world:

> And there must belong to an individual soul that is really a soul some kind of righteousness and moral integrity, and there must be true knowledge in the souls which are in us, and these are not images or likenesses of their Forms as things are in the sense-world, but those very Forms themselves existing here in a different mode.[26]

The notion "in the souls which are in us" (*en tais par' hêmin psychais*) refers to the individual human souls which have to be truly soul and which do not only have the images of virtues and ideas in them, but the virtues and truth itself.[27] They are soul, part of the intelligible world.

Plotinus combines the topics of the distinction between soul and intellect, the adherence of soul to the intelligible realm and the question of the method and the path of the ascent and thereby opens up the topic of philosophizing, of what philosophy has to do. Thus he asks in I 3 [20]:

> What art is there, what method or practice, which will take us up there where we must go? Where that is, that it is to the Good, the First Princi-

---

δεῖ ἰέναι, νοῦς δὲ προέστηκε μὲν ἀρχῆς τῆς πρώτης ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ ἐν προθύροις τἀγαθοῦ ἀπαγγέλλων ἐν αὑτῷ τὰ πάντα, ὥσπερ ἐκείνου τύπος μᾶλλον ἐν πλήθει ἐκείνου πάντη μένοντος ἐν ἑνί; The image of the "porch of the Good" comes from Plato's *Philebus* (64c).

23 Cf. V 9 [5] 5, 1–10.

24 V 9 [5] 5, 10–11 (Armstrong): Ἔθος δὲ ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν κἀκεῖνα ταῖς ἐπινοίαις χωρίζειν.

25 Cf. V 9 [5] 8, 16–20; V 9 [5] 9, 1–3.

26 V 9 [5] 13, 7–11 (Armstrong): Εἶναι δὲ ψυχῆς ὄντως οὔσης ἑκάστης καὶ δικαιοσύνην δεῖ τινα καὶ σωφροσύνην, καὶ ἐν ταῖς παρ' ἡμῖν ψυχαῖς ἐπιστήμην ἀληθινήν, οὐκ εἴδωλα οὐδὲ εἰκόνας ἐκείνων ὡς ἐν αἰσθητῷ, ἀλλὰ ταὐτὰ ἐκεῖνα ἄλλον τρόπον ὄντα ἐνταῦθα·

27 Cf. Schniewind 2007, 203.

> ple, we can take as agreed and established by many demonstrations; and the demonstrations themselves were a kind of leading up on our way.[28]

The motif of ascent of I 6 [1] comes back, but the subject of the ascent is not the soul, but "we," "we philosophers," who want to ascend to the Good. The first step in "our" investigation is a distinction of different kinds of human beings, the musician, the lover and the philosopher. While the philosopher ascends "by nature," the musician and the lover have to be led.[29] The musician and the lover are both moved by beauty, but the former is not yet moved by "absolute beauty" whereas the latter "has a kind of memory of beauty."[30] The philosopher is already on his way and merely needs someone to "show him the way" and to allow him to ascend via mathematical studies and dialectics.[31]

Plotinus continues the topic of philosophical thought in treatise VI 5 [23]. In the first chapter of this treatise, Plotinus presents the metaphysical basis of the general idea of unity, and turns, in the second chapter, to the conflict of this conviction with discursive reasoning.[32]

> But for the inquiry into what is one and fully being we must employ principles that are proper for producing conviction about it, that is, intelligible principles, which apply to intelligible objects and to true substance.[33]

The "we" refers to Plotinus and his co-philosophers. But "we" are not only what performs the investigation, but "we" are subject to change in it:

> Indeed, both we and what belongs to us are referred back to being, and we reach up to that level and the first thing that comes from it, and we think those objects without having images or impressions of them. But if we do not have images or impressions of them, we think them by being them. So if we participate in true knowledge, we are those objects, not by taking them into ourselves, but rather by ourselves being in them.[34]

---

28 I 3 [20] 1, 1–5 (Armstrong): Τίς τέχνη ἢ μέθοδος ἢ ἐπιτήδευσις ἡμᾶς οἷ δεῖ πορευθῆναι ἀνάγει; Ὅπου μὲν οὖν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν, ὡς ἐπὶ τἀγαθὸν καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν πρώτην, κείσθω διωμολογημένον καὶ διὰ πολλῶν δεδειγμένον· καὶ δὴ καὶ δι' ὧν τοῦτο ἐδείκνυτο, ἀναγωγή τις ἦν.

29 I 3 [20] 1, 9–10 (Armstrong).

30 I 3 [20] 1, 19–2, 13 (Armstrong).

31 I 3 [20] 3, 1–10 (Armstrong).

32 Cf. Tornau 1998, 321.

33 VI 5 [23] 2, 7–9 (Emilsson/Strange): Ἡμῖν δὲ λεκτέον εἰς τὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ πάντη ὄντος λόγον οἰκείας εἰς πίστιν ἀρχάς· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ νοητὰς νοητῶν καὶ τῆς ἀληθινῆς οὐσίας ἐχομένας.

34 VI 5 [23] 7, 1–6 (Emilsson/Strange): Ἀνάγεται γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς τὸ ὄν, καὶ ἀνα-

On the highest level of knowledge, "we" do not understand the objects as objects, distinct from "us" or in form of their images and impressions, but by being these objects. The "we" on this level is identical to the intelligible objects, and thus understands them.[35] This leads to the identification of all souls: "But since others too, not only we, are those objects, all of us are those objects: and therefore, since we are together, we are those objects with all. Thus 'we' are all one."[36] The claim about knowing as being identical to the objects of thought leads to Plotinus' famous thesis of all souls being one.

Plotinus makes a similar point in his treatise on eternity and time (III 7 [45]):

> Are we, then, saying this as if we were giving evidence on others' behalf and talking about what is not our own? How could we be? For what understanding could there be [of eternity] if we were not in contact with it? But how could we be in contact with what was not our own? We too, then, must have a share in eternity. But how can we, when we are in time? But what it means to be in time and what it means to be in eternity may become known to us when we have discovered time. So, then, we must go down from eternity to the enquiry into time, and to time.[37]

It is not possible to talk about things alien to us; there has to be a similarity between the knower and the object of knowledge—a motif that is already present in treatise I 6 [1][38] and in the passage in VI 5 [23] mentioned above. The second motif in this passage is that of giving evidence or of showing the way to ourselves and to others. Plotinus develops this idea in V 3 [49] where he writes that "we only try, as far as possible, to make signs to ourselves about it [i.e. the

---

βαίνομέν τε εἰς ἐκεῖνο καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἀπ' ἐκείνου, καὶ νοοῦμεν ἐκεῖνα οὐκ εἴδωλα αὐτῶν οὐδὲ τύπους ἔχοντες. Εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτο, ὄντες ἐκεῖνα. Εἰ οὖν ἀληθινῆς ἐπιστήμης μετέχομεν, ἐκεῖνά ἐσμεν οὐκ ἀπολαβόντες αὐτὰ ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς ἐν ἐκείνοις ὄντες.

35 Cf. p. 122.

36 VI 5 [23] 7, 6–8 (Emilsson/Strange): Ὄντων δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, οὐ μόνον ἡμῶν, ἐκεῖνα, πάντες ἐσμὲν ἐκεῖνα. Ὁμοῦ ἄρα ὄντες μετὰ πάντων ἐσμὲν ἐκεῖνα· πάντα ἄρα ἐσμὲν ἕν.

37 III 7 [45] 7, 1–8 (Armstrong): Ταῦτα οὖν λέγομεν ἆρά γε μαρτυροῦντες ἑτέροις καὶ ὡς περὶ ἀλλοτρίων τοὺς λόγους ποιούμεθα; Καὶ πῶς; Τίς γὰρ ἂν σύνεσις γένοιτο μὴ ἐφαπτομένοις; Πῶς δ' ἂν ἐφαψαίμεθα τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις; Δεῖ ἄρα καὶ ἡμῖν μετεῖναι τοῦ αἰῶνος. Ἀλλὰ ἐν χρόνῳ οὖσι πῶς; Ἀλλὰ πῶς ἐν χρόνῳ καὶ πῶς ἐν αἰῶνι ἔστιν εἶναι, γνωσθείη ἂν εὑρεθέντος πρότερον τοῦ χρόνου. Καὶ τοίνυν καταβατέον ἡμῖν ἐξ αἰῶνος ἐπὶ τὴν ζήτησιν τοῦ χρόνου καὶ τὸν χρόνον·

38 Cf. I 6 [1] 9, 29–34. On the idea of the knowing the like through the like cf. Müller 1965.

One]."[39] Since it is "ineffable,"[40] this can only be an approximation and a hint, but never a statement which entirely grasps its object. The consequence of this ineffability is not silence, however:

> How then do we ourselves speak about it? We do indeed say something about it, but we certainly do not speak it, and we have neither knowledge or thought of it. But if we do not have it in knowledge, do we not have it at all? But we have it in such a way that we speak about it, but do not speak it. For we say what it is not, but we do not say what it is: so that we speak about it from what comes after it.[41]

Plotinus repeats his general thesis that "It," the One, is ineffable, but that one can speak about it and towards it,[42] and "we" refers again to Plotinus and his circle of philosophers and to all those philosophers who want to think towards the One. Plotinus uses a comparison with those who are "in the grip of divine possession," those who know that they have something great in them, but do not know *what* they have.[43] In a similar way "we seem to be disposed towards the One, divining, when we have our intellect pure, that this is the inner intellect."[44] "Our" relation to It, to the One, is marked by the fact that "we" cannot grasp and say it, but that "we" have some access to it because something in "us" belongs to this higher world.[45] To philosophize means to activate this part and work towards something higher and to return to the higher world. Philosophy is self-formation and has as its goal the ascent of the soul and the shift of the focus of consciousness to the higher realm which will allow the soul to loosen or even cut its links to the sensible world and to dwell more and more in the intelligible realm.

---

39 V 3 [49] 13, 5–6 (Armstrong).

40 V 3 [49] 13, 1 (Armstrong).

41 V 3 [49] 14, 1–8 (Armstrong): Πῶς οὖν ἡμεῖς λέγομεν περὶ αὐτοῦ; Ἢ λέγομεν μέν τι περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐ μὴν αὐτὸ λέγομεν οὐδὲ γνῶσιν οὐδὲ νόησιν ἔχομεν αὐτοῦ. πῶς οὖν λέγομεν περὶ αὐτοῦ, εἰ μὴ αὐτὸ ἔχομεν; ἢ, εἰ μὴ ἔχομεν τῇ γνώσει, καὶ παντελῶς οὐκ ἔχομεν; ἀλλ' οὕτως ἔχομεν, ὥστε περὶ αὐτοῦ μὲν λέγειν, αὐτὸ δὲ μὴ λέγειν. Καὶ γὰρ λέγομεν, ὃ μὴ ἔστιν· ὃ δέ ἐστιν, οὐ λέγομεν· ὥστε ἐκ τῶν ὕστερον περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγομεν.

42 On this passage, but without a reference to the "we," cf. O'Meara 1990, 151–152.

43 Cf. V 3 [49] 14, 8–13.

44 V 3 [49] 14, 13–15 (Armstrong): οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν ἔχειν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο, ὅταν νοῦν καθαρὸν ἔχωμεν, χρώμενοι, ὡς οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἔνδον νοῦς.

45 On "our" relation to the One cf. especially VI 9 [9] and chapter IV.1 (66–72).

CHAPTER 8

We Are Multiple

Treatise I 1 [53] is Plotinus' penultimate treatise.[1] It contains the most sophisticated and elaborated theory of the *hêmeis*; it is "a climax to Plotinus' answer" to the question of what "we" are[2] and will thus be presented as one complex answer which connects and combines the issues discussed before. The first six chapters are a preparation for the introduction of this term in the seventh chapter of the text. Plotinus starts with the soul and a number of activities traditionally connected to the soul and leads the readers to the conclusion that it is impossible to understand these activities and their subject without the concept of the "we."

1 Soul and Body

In the first chapter Plotinus presents an extensive program and enquires after different activities which are traditionally linked to the soul, from sense-perception over *pathêmata*, *doxa*, actions (which go back to the *pathêmata*) and *dianoia* to the highest form of thought of *noêsis*.[3] In addition, Plotinus wants to treat *to episkopoun*, that which is doing the investigation—we will come back to this noteworthy question.[4] The formula he uses is "whose (*tinos*) are they."[5] And it is clear from the start that Plotinus does not think that all of these psychic functions have to belong to the same entity. At the beginning, when he enquires about the "whose" of the *pathêmata*, Plotinus offers three possible answers: 1. The soul; 2. The soul which uses the body; 3. "a third thing's consisting of both;" and this would be "either the mixture (*migma*), or another different thing resulting from the mixture (*allo heteron ek migmatos*)."[6]

Plotinus' first step is to distinguish between "soul" (*psychê*) and "to be soul" (*psychê*(*i*) *einai*). If they are distinct, soul is something composite (*synthêton*)

1 On this treatise cf. especially Aubry 2004; Kalligas 2014, 101–131; O'Daly 2017.

2 O'Daly 1973, 47; Igal 1979, 344.

3 Cf. I 1 [53] 1.

4 I 1 [53] 1, 9–11: καὶ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ ἐπισκοποῦν καὶ περὶ τούτων τὴν ζήτησιν καὶ τὴν κρίσιν ποιούμενον τί ποτ' ἂν εἴη. Cf. Aubry 2004, 74, note 7. Cf. below p. 144–146.

5 I 1 [53] 1, 2 (my translation): τίνος ἂν εἶεν;

6 I 1 [53] 1, 2–5 (O'Daly): ἢ τρίτου τινὸς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν. Διχῶς δὲ καὶ τοῦτο· ἢ γὰρ τὸ μῖγμα, ἢ ἄλλο ἕτερον ἐκ τοῦ μίγματος.

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_010

and can have *pathê*.[7] If one says on the other hand that soul (*psychê*) and "to be soul" (*psychê*(*i*) *einai*) are identical then soul is form (*eidos*); then it is immortal, imperishable and impassible (*athanaton*, *aphtharton*, *apathes*); it does not receive anything from below, just from above, and it is autarchic (*autarkes*). It has neither fear, desires, pain, grief, nor pleasure; it does not have sense-perception nor *dianoia* and *doxa* which result from sense-perception. Only *noêsis* and pure pleasure might belong to it.[8] The soul which is identical to soul itself is certainly not the *tinos* of the *pathê*, of sense-perception, nor of *dianoia* or of *doxa*. In order to answer the questions raised at the beginning it is therefore necessary to investigate soul not in its essential form, but soul in the body: "But now we must consider the soul in the body …; after all, it is from this combination that 'the whole is called a living thing.'"[9] The argumentation which follows tries to fathom the relation of soul and body. Plotinus first rejects the image of the body as the tool of the soul: A carpenter is not affected by what happens to his tools, but sense-perception has to come through to the soul which needs to know what happens from the outside.[10] Then he discusses other traditional ways of explaining the relationship between body and soul:

> But before the separation by philosophy,[11] how was it? There was surely a prior mixture [with the body]. But if there was a prior mixture, it was either some kind of blending, or soul was, as it were, 'woven through,' or it was like an unseparated form, or a form in contact, like the helmsman, or one ⟨part⟩ operating in one way and the other in another way. I mean, in so far as one part is separate, that is, the using part, and the other somehow mixed with the body, and being on a level with that which it uses.[12]

---

7 Cf. I 1 [53] 2, 1–5.

8 Cf. I 1 [53] 2, 5–30.

9 I 1 [53] 3, 1–3 (O'Daly): Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐν σώματι θετέον ψυχήν, […] ἐξ οὗ καὶ αὐτῆς ζῷον τὸ σύμπαν ἐκλήθη.

10 I 1 [53] 3, 3–16. Cf. Aubry 2004, 80, note 18.

11 This sentence is ambiguous. On the one hand the separation of body and soul is an analytic distinction which is done in reflection whereas in the living being body and soul are connected. On the other hand it is philosophy's duty, according to Plato's *Phaedo* (67c–d), to separate the soul from the body, and soul is connected to the body unless philosophy has accomplished her task (this is the interpretation O'Daly 2017, 89–90, favors). The main interest in the *Phaedo* is to propagate the separation of the soul from the body; that will be Plotinus' final goal as well, but he first wants to discuss what happened before the separation.

12 I 1 [53] 3, 17–23 (O'Daly): Ἀλλὰ πρὸ τοῦ χωρίσαι διὰ φιλοσοφίας αὐτὸ πῶς εἶχεν; Ἢ ἐμέμικτο. Ἀλλὰ εἰ ἐμέμικτο, ἢ κρᾶσίς τις ἦν, ἢ ὡς διαπλακεῖσα, ἢ ὡς εἶδος οὐ κεχωρισμένον, ἢ εἶδος ἐφαπτό-

The formulation of being "woven through" comes from Plato's *Timaeus*;[13] the image of the helmsman from Aristotle.[14] Plotinus presents these five options, but already gives a hint that he himself favors the last option when he writes:

> that philosophy may turn this part also toward the using part and lead the using part away—in so far as there is not absolute necessity—from what it uses, so that it does not always use it, or use it at all.[15]

Philosophy is self-formation and therapy of the soul and its task is not only to analyze the exact relation of body and soul, but to work upon it and to lead the soul upwards. In order to understand this relation, Plotinus investigates the various options.[16] The first option—Plotinus speaks of mixture (*memiktai*), but he probably means *krasis*, i.e. the first option quoted above—is insufficient because soul and body are not of the same kind and cannot be mixed. The second option ("woven through") does not allow mutual affection (*homoiopathê*), but as long as the soul is in the body it has to know what befalls it. The soul cannot be like light in air.[17] The considerations of the third, fourth and fifth option blend into each other. Plotinus writes:

> But will it be in the body like form in matter? Well, it will in the first place be there as a separate form, seeing as it is a substance, and this would correspond more to its using ⟨function⟩. But, if it is like it is for the axe, the shape imposed upon the iron, and if the combination, the axe,[18] does what it does—the iron shaped in this way, but ⟨performing⟩ in accordance with its shape—we should rather attribute to the body all the common affections, but to 'a particular sort' of body, 'the natural, organic, having life potentially.'[19] For indeed he says that it is absurd 'to say that

---

μενον, ὥσπερ ὁ κυβερνήτης, ἢ τὸ μὲν οὕτως αὐτοῦ, τὸ δὲ ἐκείνως· λέγω δὲ ᾗ τὸ μὲν κεχωρισμένον, ὅπερ τὸ χρώμενον, τὸ δὲ μεμιγμένον ὁπωσοῦν καὶ αὐτὸ ὂν ἐν τάξει τοῦ ᾧ χρῆται.

13 Cf. Plato, *Tim*. 36e.

14 Cf. Aristotle, *De an*. II, 1 413a8–9. Cf. also Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De an*. 14, 4; 15, 9–29; 20, 28–21, 10 (with an explanation of the inadequacy of this image for soul and body).

15 I 1 [53] 3, 23–26 (O'Daly). ἵνα τοῦτο ἡ φιλοσοφία καὶ αὐτὸ ἐπιστρέφῃ πρὸς τὸ χρώμενον καὶ τὸ χρώμενον ἀπάγῃ, ὅσον μὴ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, ἀπὸ τοῦ ᾧ χρῆται, ὡς μὴ ἀεὶ μηδὲ χρῆσθαι. Cf. O'Daly 2017, 94–96.

16 Cf. O'Daly 2017, 90–103 with many references to Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias.

17 Plotinus uses the image of light in air in IV 3 [27] 22, 1–23, 2 as an appropriate image of the presences of the soul in the body. Here, in I 1 [53], it illustrates a theory which seems insufficient.

18 Cf. Aristotle, *De an*. II 1, 412b10–15.

19 Plotinus refers to the natural, organic body, having life potentially, from Aristotle's *De*

> the soul weaves,' so that it is also absurd to say that it desires or grieves; but rather the living thing does so.[20]

In *De anima* Aristotle writes that one should not say that the soul weaves, builds, is angry or full of pity, learns and thinks, but that it is the human being with the soul.[21] Aristotle assume that such activities cannot be understood as activities of soul alone since they require an embodied life. None of them would be possible without soul, in a lifeless body, but none of them could take place without the body either. For Aristotle, the reason is simply that there is no soul without a body, soul is the form of the body, and thus all these activities belong to the human being. According to Plotinus, soul can be separate, but he agrees with Aristotle and attributes certain functions—weaving, desiring, grieving—to the living being. The living being (*zôon*) thus seems to be the most likely subject of affection, but it still has to be defined. In chapter 5, Plotinus offers three options: "But one should say that the living thing is either the 'body of a certain sort,' (*to sôma to toionde*) or 'the common' entity (*to koinon*), or some other third thing that has come into being from both (*heteron ti triton ex amphoin gegenêmeon*)."[22] In chapter 7, Plotinus will finally present his definition of the "living being," but before he comes to this definition, in the remainder of chapter 5 and in chapter 6, Plotinus presents a number of difficulties regarding the understanding of sense-perceptions and passions, and he focuses especially on the role of body and soul in these affections. These questions culminate with the following problem:

> But if perception is movement through the body that ends in the soul, how will the soul not perceive? Well, when the capacity to perceive is present, through its presence the combination will perceive what it per-

---

anima, but unlike Aristotle he uses this term as a synonym for the living being when he ascribes affections and actions to it.

20 I 1 [53] 4, 18–27 (O'Daly): Ἀλλ' ὡς εἶδος ἐν ὕλῃ ἔσται ἐν τῷ σώματι; Πρῶτον μὲν ὡς χωριστὸν εἶδος ἔσται, εἴπερ οὐσία, καὶ μᾶλλον ἂν εἴη κατὰ τὸ χρώμενον. Εἰ δὲ ὡς τῷ πελέκει τὸ σχῆμα τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ σιδήρῳ, καὶ τὸ συναμφότερον ὁ πέλεκυς ποιήσει ἃ ποιήσει ὁ σίδηρος ὁ οὕτως ἐσχηματισμένος, κατὰ τὸ σχῆμα μέντοι, μᾶλλον ἂν τῷ σώματι διδοῖμεν ὅσα κοινὰ πάθη, τῷ μέντοι τοιούτῳ, τῷ φυσικῷ, ὀργανικῷ, δυνάμει ζωὴν ἔχοντι. Καὶ γὰρ ἄτοπόν φησι τὴν ψυχὴν ὑφαίνειν λέγειν, ὥστε καὶ ἐπιθυμεῖν καὶ λυπεῖσθαι· ἀλλὰ τὸ ζῷον μᾶλλον.

21 Cf. Aristotle, *De an.* I 4, 408b11–15.

22 I 1 [53] 5, 1–2 (O'Daly): Ἀλλὰ τὸ ζῷον ἢ τὸ σῶμα δεῖ λέγειν τὸ τοιόνδε, ἢ τὸ κοινόν, ἢ ἕτερόν τι τρίτον ἐξ ἀμφοῖν γεγενημένον. Cf. O'Daly 2017, 105–106 who writes that Plotinus favors the second option, but the situation is a bit more complicated as the following chapter will show.

> ceives. But if the power is not going to be moved, how will it still be the combination that perceives, if neither soul nor the soul-power are included in it?[23]

Plotinus is faced with a dilemma: If the combination perceives, it seems necessary to attribute perception to the soul as well. If, however, the soul is to remain impassible, it seems unclear how its presence could lead to sense-perception in the composite. Yet, Plotinus wants the soul to remain impassible, and he wants to attribute sense-perception to the living being. He thus has to define the living being in a different way. It cannot merely be the combination of body and soul.

2 We Perceivers

The first six chapters of the treatise present many ideas, issues and questions, but only in chapter seven Plotinus begins the presentation of his own solution.[24]

> Right. Suppose that it is the combination that perceives, the soul, constituted as it is, by its presence not giving itself to the combination or to the other component, but making, out of the body, constituted as it is, and some kind of light given by it, the nature of the living thing, something distinct, to which are attributed perceiving and all the other affections of the living thing.[25]

The living being is defined as *synamphoteron*, but not as a *koinon* of body and soul, but as a compound of the so qualified body (*tou sômatos tou toioutou*)[26]

---

23 I 1 [53] 6, 10–16 (O'Daly): Ἀλλ' εἰ ἡ αἴσθησις διὰ σώματος κίνησις οὖσα εἰς ψυχὴν τελευτᾷ, πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ οὐκ αἰσθήσεται; Ἡ τῆς δυνάμεως τῆς αἰσθητικῆς παρούσης τῷ ταύτην παρεῖναι αἰσθήσεται 〈ὃ〉 τι αἰσθήσεται τὸ συναμφότερον. Ἀλλ' εἰ ἡ δύναμις μὴ κινήσεται, πῶς ἔτι τὸ συναμφότερον μὴ συναριθμουμένης ψυχῆς μηδὲ τῆς ψυχικῆς δυνάμεως;

24 G. Aubry assumes that the first lines of chapter 7 still belong to the previous part (Aubry 2004, 69, 91); but in my view—as in O'Daly's—these first lines are part of the exposition of his own theory.

25 I 1 [53] 7, 1–6 (O'Daly): Ἢ τὸ συναμφότερον ἔστω τῆς ψυχῆς τῷ παρεῖναι οὐχ αὑτὴν δούσης τῆς τοιαύτης εἰς τὸ συναμφότερον ἢ εἰς θάτερον, ἀλλὰ ποιούσης ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ τοιούτου καί τινος οἷον φωτὸς τοῦ παρ' αὐτὴν δοθέντος τὴν τοῦ ζῴου φύσιν ἕτερόν τι, οὗ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὅσα ζῴου πάθη εἴρηται. On the difficulties of translations regarding παρ' αὐτὴν cf. Marzolo 2006, 131–133. Cf. Aubry 2004, 88, note 65.

26 The notion is Aristotelian, as Aubry rightly notes, but she concludes "ce que l'âme vient

and "some kind of light (*tinos hoion phôtos*)" which the soul gives.[27] Soul remains *apathês* and does not connect to the body. Thus, the living being is not the combination of the transcendent soul with a body that was informed by an immanent form of soul,[28] but the combination of something that comes from soul with the body while the transcendent soul does not belong to the living being. Perception and affections (*pathê*) belong to the living being so defined.[29] This living being is the subject of sense-perception and affections (*pathê*).[30] This statement answers the first main question of this treatise, the question of the *tinos* of sense-perception and *pathê*.

However, Plotinus does not immediately turn to the next question, that is to the question to whom to ascribe *dianoia*, *doxa*, etc., but asks a different question which surprises, at least at first:

> But how it is we who perceive?[31]

Plotinus does not use the simple *aisthanometha*, but the emphasized *hêmeis aisthanometha*. Up to this point in the treatise, Plotinus had only spoken of the living being, of soul and the body, etc., but never of a *hêmeis*, a "we," as a possible subject of all these activities. But apparently, the answer that the living being is subject of sense-perception does not suffice.[32] Whereas Plotinus had argued that "we" are not those who perceive in V 3 [49],[33] he reverses himself now. This question calls upon everyday experience and usage of language in which "we" say without hesitation that "we" see a house or we smell

---

illuminer n'est pas une matière inerte, mais un corps vivant; l'âme n'anime donc de corps que déjà animé" (Aubry 2004, 199). In my view, however, we have to distinguish between lifeless matter, a potentially living body and a living body. The uncertainty in Aubry's presentation results from a combination of the present passage with other passages where the world-soul give the trace of the soul to the body, while the individual soul takes it over (ibid. 199). Here, however, the *eidôlon* is not given by the world-soul. Cf. Taormina 2020 who argues against a widespread interpretation (20) and claims that this passage suggests that the individual soul gives life to the body and not the soul of the cosmos (17–18).

27 Cf. Aubry 2004, 88, note 66.

28 Contra Tornau 1998, 280.

29 Cf. Aubry 2004, 88, note 67. Thus, they do not just belong to the soul as Caluori 2008, 134 writes.

30 Cf. Aubry 2004, 88, note 67.

31 I 1 [53] 7, 6 (O'Daly): Ἀλλὰ πῶς ἡμεῖς αἰσθανόμεθα;

32 Contra Plass 1982, 245 who thinks that it is the "elusiveness of such a creature," i.e. the living being as it was just defined, that makes him ask why "we" perceive.

33 Cf. above p. 73.

the ocean. It is thus not the "naively experienced sense-perception" which presents "a riddle" for Plotinus;[34] on the contrary, it is the conflict of the every day experience with the Platonic tradition that motivates his deliberations. According to the Platonic tradition "we" are the soul and the soul is *apathês* and we could thus not say that "we" perceive, at least not if we speak technically and in a strict sense. The *Alcibiades 1* speaks, of course, about "we ourselves."[35] Plotinus, however, does not chose the easy way out; he could depreciate the everyday way of speaking of "our" sense-perception as superficial and imprecise and propagate its replacement by the correct philosophical definition. On the contrary, he takes the common ascription of sense-perception to "us" seriously.[36] Since he does not question the identification of soul and true human being, he concludes that "we (*hêmeis*)" are not identical to the soul. *Hêmeis* (and not *hêmeis autoi*) comes clear as a new notion next to body and soul and the following chapters develop more explicitly how to understand this "we." First, Plotinus answers the question why it is "we" who perceive.

> Surely because we are not separated from the living thing, constituted as it is, even if other things of greater worth are present to us, to make up the whole substance of the human being, which is composed of many elements.[37]

The human being—and thus "we"—is "composed of many elements," and some of these elements are of greater and others of lesser worth. If "we" were only what is higher, "we" would not have sense-perceptions, but since "we" are now in our life here in the sensible realm not only what is higher, but also connected to the "living thing," "we" now have sense-perceptions. We have to distinguish between "we ourselves (*hêmeis autoi*)" and "we (*hêmeis*);" the former designates only what is higher, what "we" *truly* are or should become while the latter is a more dynamic and broader term which includes the higher and the lower since "we" are now not "separated from the living thing." Thus "we" perceive.

---

34 Contra Himmerich 1959, 92 (my translation).

35 Cf. (Pseudo-)Plato, *Alc. 1*, 128e3 (*hêmas autous*); 128e11 (*ti pot' esmen autoi*); 129a9 (*hêmôn autôn*).

36 Contra Emilsson 2017, 288, but cf. also 291 for a slightly different point.

37 I 1 [53] 7, 6–9 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Ἢ, ὅτι οὐκ ἀπηλλάγημεν τοῦ τοιούτου ζῴου, καὶ εἰ ἄλλα ἡμῖν τιμιώτερα εἰς τὴν ὅλην ἀνθρώπου οὐσίαν ἐκ πολλῶν οὖσαν πάρεστι.

3 We Are Most of All There

After having discussed the attribution of sense-perception to the living being and to "us," Plotinus now moves to higher functions of the soul. The "power of the soul's perception" (which is to be distinguished from "external sensation")[38] perceives impressions, not the perceptible itself; the external perception is an image of the inner perception which is a vision of forms (*eidôn theôria*). And these forms are the basis for higher functions of the soul:

> Moreover, it is from these forms—from which the soul, alone, already receives leadership over the living thing—that reasonings and opinions and intellections come. And it is precisely there, above all, that we are situated. The things before these are ours, but we are actually what comes next, placed above, over the living thing.[39]

Rational thought (*dianoia*), but also opinion (*doxa*) with its tendency to falsehood and the pure thought of the *nous* are all based on the same forms. And these forms are the primary location of the "we": "And it is precisely there, above all, that we are situated." The "we" is not identified with these faculties, but it is presented as being in this space which is its adequate realm, i.e. the realm of thought in a general sense which centers on rational thought,[40] but includes also opinion and intellection. What comes before is "ours," i.e. it is accessible to us in a certain way without being what "we" are in the same way as rational thought. If the realm of thought is our domain, "we" are above the "living thing." Plotinus goes back to a famous Platonic image of the soul in order to explain "the living thing," and it thus becomes clear that the "living thing" is not identical to the living being, but to the soul with all its faculties:

> There will be no impediment to calling the whole 'living thing'; as it is mixed both with respect to the lower ⟨components⟩ and what comes

38 I 1 [53] 7, 9–14 (O'Daly): Τὴν δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ αἰσθάνεσθαι δύναμιν οὐ τῶν αἰσθητῶν εἶναι δεῖ, τῶν δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἐγγιγνομένων τῷ ζῴῳ τύπων ἀντιληπτικὴν εἶναι μᾶλλον· νοητὰ γὰρ ἤδη ταῦτα· ὡς τὴν αἴσθησιν τὴν ἔξω εἴδωλον εἶναι ταύτης, ἐκείνην δὲ ἀληθεστέραν τῇ οὐσίᾳ οὖσαν εἰδῶν μόνων ἀπαθῶς εἶναι θεωρίαν. On Plotinus' theory of sense-perception cf. Emilsson 1988, especially 67–73 on this distinction.

39 I 1 [53] 7, 14–18 (O'Daly): Ἀπὸ δὴ τούτων τῶν εἰδῶν, ἀφ' ὧν ψυχὴ ἤδη παραδέχεται μόνη τὴν τοῦ ζῴου ἡγεμονίαν, διάνοιαι δὴ καὶ δόξαι καὶ νοήσεις· ἔνθα δὴ ἡμεῖς μάλιστα. Τὰ δὲ πρὸ τούτων ἡμέτερα, ἡμεῖς δὴ τὸ ἐντεῦθεν ἄνω ἐφεστηκότες τῷ ζῴῳ.

40 Cf. Aubry 2014, 317.

> next, the true human being, more or less. But the former are the 'lion-like' element and, in short, the 'variegated animal'.[41]

In Plato's *Republic*, the inner human being, the lion and the variegated animal represent the rational part (*logistikon*), the irascible (*thymoeides*) and the desiring part (*epithymêtikon*), and the rational part is encouraged to educate the irascible part and form it into an ally against the desiring part.[42] Plotinus increases the dynamics of the image: "We" do not have a static identity, "we" are above "the living thing," but we can sink towards the lower functions and "we" can, if we make the right kind of effort, ascend to intellect.

Discursive thought is central for the "we," but it is not a matter of identity, but of identification. When Plotinus writes: "whereas, since man coincides with the reasoning soul, when we reason, it is *we* who reason, for reasonings are activities of the soul",[43] he does not merely identify "we" and discursive thought, but he underlines that "we" have to identify "ourselves" with discursive thought. By naming the *logismoi* as *energêmata* of the soul Plotinus tacitly answers the question about the *tinos* of the *dianoia* he had raised in chapter 1: it is the soul who reasons. And "we" are the subject of reasoning whenever "we" identify ourselves with soul and reason. But "we" are not merely identical to soul since "we" are also those who perceive, and "we" have make the effort to become soul and to think.

Chapter 7 concludes with a close correlation of *hêmeis* and rational thought. In chapter 8 Plotinus continues the definition of the position of the *hêmeis* and he now looks up towards Intellect (*nous*) and to God. He asks succinctly: *Pros de ton noun pôs*? ("But how [are we] towards the Intellect?").[44] First he clarifies that he is not interested here in the human intellect, but in "Intellect itself (*auton ton noun*)," and writes: "For to be sure we have this too, above us."[45] If the proper place of the *hêmeis* is rational thought, then the intellect is above. "We" have it in "common, because it is indivisible and one and everywhere the same; our own, because each has it as a whole in his primal soul."[46] In treatise V 3 [49]

---

41 I 1 [53] 7, 18–21 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Κωλύσει δὲ οὐδὲν τὸ σύμπαν ζῷον λέγειν, μικτὸν μὲν τὰ κάτω, τὸ δὲ ἐντεῦθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀληθὴς σχεδόν· ἐκεῖνα δὲ τὸ λεοντῶδες καὶ τὸ ποικίλον ὅλως θηρίον.

42 Cf. Plato, *Rep*. 588b10; 588c–e.

43 I 1 [53] 7, 21–24 (O'Daly): Συνδρόμου γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῇ λογικῇ ψυχῇ, ὅταν λογιζώμεθα, ἡμεῖς λογιζόμεθα τῷ τοὺς λογισμοὺς ψυχῆς εἶναι ἐνεργήματα.

44 I 1 [53] 8, 1 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Πρὸς δὲ τὸν νοῦν πῶς;

45 I 1 [53] 8, 3 (O'Daly): Ἢ ἔχομεν καὶ τοῦτον ὑπεράνω ἡμῶν.

46 I 1 [53] 8, 3–6 (O'Daly): Ἔχομεν δὲ ἢ κοινὸν ἢ ἴδιον, ἢ καὶ κοινὸν πάντων καὶ ἴδιον· κοινὸν μέν,

Plotinus speaks of "use" and calls the intellect "ours and not ours."[47] Here, in chapter 8 of I 1 [53], he speaks of "having," i.e. of a more constant, closer relation to the intellect whom "we" have "in common" and to the intellect whom everyone possesses as "our own." Plotinus tries to situate the "we," and the region of thought is clearly where our center is, and especially rational thought. If "we" take rationality as the center, Intellect is above, but it is not above in a distant way, but as something "we" have, and it will be, at the end of the treatise what "we" become when "we" ascend.[48]

After the relation of the "we" to the intellect Plotinus comes to the next higher level. The next question is: *ton de theon pôs* ("But how [do we have] the God?"[49]). He answers: "Surely as mounted on the intelligible nature and the essence that is truly essence."[50] With his definition of God Plotinus alludes to Plato's definition of the Good as "beyond being" from the *Republic*; this is the first level of the One or the Good. Plotinus does not directly answer the question how "we" "possess" God, he just points out that God is above the intellect and then writes:

> and we are third from there, composed, he says, of 'the indivisible' above, 'and from the ⟨essence⟩ divided in bodies,' which one must conceive of as so divided in bodies that it gives itself to bodily magnitudes whatever the size of each living thing, for it gives itself to the universe too, while being one;[51]

Soul is divisible and indivisible at the same time; as soul itself it is indivisible, as world-soul and human souls it is divisible and gives itself to bodies.[52] This tentative description does not seem quite adequate to Plotinus as he gives his reader a second—better—description which suggest that the soul does

---

ὅτι ἀμέριστος καὶ εἷς καὶ πανταχοῦ ὁ αὐτός, ἴδιον δέ, ὅτι ἔχει καὶ ἕκαστος αὐτὸν ὅλον ἐν ψυχῇ τῇ πρώτῃ.

47 V 3 [49] 3, 26–29 (my translation): Ἢ ἡμέτερον καὶ οὐχ ἡμέτερον· διὸ καὶ προσχρώμεθα αὐτῷ καὶ οὐ προσχρώμεθα—διανοίᾳ δὲ ἀεί—καὶ ἡμέτερον μὲν χρωμένων, οὐ προσχρωμένων δὲ οὐχ ἡμέτερον.

48 I 1 [53] 13, 5–8. Cf. below p. 145.

49 I 1 [53] 8, 8–9 (O'Daly, slightly revised).

50 I 1 [53] 8, 9–10 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Ἢ ὡς ἐποχούμενον τῇ νοητῇ φύσει καὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ τῇ ὄντως.

51 I 1 [53] 8, 10–15 (O'Daly): ἡμᾶς δὲ ἐκεῖθεν τρίτους ἐκ τῆς ἀμερίστου, φησί, τῆς ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐκ τῆς περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστῆς, ἣν δὴ δεῖ νοεῖν οὕτω μεριστὴν περὶ τὰ σώματα, ὅτι δίδωσιν ἑαυτὴν τοῖς σώματος μεγέθεσιν, ὁπόσον ἄν ζῷον ᾖ ἕκαστον, ἐπεὶ καὶ τῷ παντὶ ὅλῳ, οὖσα μία·

52 Cf. O'Daly 2017, 130–131.

not itself connect to the bodies, but that "it shines into them and makes living things not out of itself and body, but remaining itself unchanged and giving images of itself, like a face in many mirrors."[53] Soul remains impassible while giving life, perceptions and affections to the living being, and in some way "we" are this impassible soul, but "we" are not just identical to it since "we" are not—or at least not in our normal state—impassible; we have, as it has been shown, sense-perceptions, and we are affected by what affects our body.[54]

4 We Are Multiple

In chapter 9, Plotinus addresses the ethical implications of the theory of the impassibility of the soul. If the soul is impassible, it cannot be responsible for bad actions. And this raises the question of who the ethical subject is. Plotinus writes:

> So the nature of that soul of ours will be free from the responsibility for all evils that a human being does and suffers. These have to do with the living being, the common entity, and 'common' as it has been described.[55]

Plotinus distinguishes between a soul and the living being or human being who is responsible for the evils that are committed. The attribution of bad actions to the human being needs to be further explained or revised, but before Plotinus gets to this development he makes an objection which questions the impassibility of the soul: "But if opinion and reasoning are proper to the soul, how is it free from error? For opinion is deceitful and many evils are done because of it."[56] Plotinus had already ascribed affections to the *zôon*, the living being and not to the soul. And he had ascribed *dianoia* to the soul when he had called the

53 I 1 [53] 8, 15–18 (O'Daly): ἢ, ὅτι φαντάζεται τοῖς σώμασι παρεῖναι ἐλλάμπουσα εἰς αὐτὰ καὶ ζῷα ποιοῦσα οὐκ ἐξ αὐτῆς καὶ σώματος, ἀλλὰ μένουσα μὲν αὐτή, εἴδωλα δὲ αὐτῆς διδοῦσα, ὥσπερ πρόσωπον ἐν πολλοῖς κατόπτροις.

54 Cf. above p. 129–131 (sense-perceptions) and below p. 140 (body). The terminology of the "we" thus solves the isssue Caluori 2022, 225–226 presents (the soul is said to be impassive, but evidence points towards "turmoil" in the soul as well).

55 I 1 [53] 9, 1–4 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Ἔσται τοίνυν ἐκείνης ἡμῖν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ φύσις ἀπηλλαγμένη αἰτίας κακῶν, ὅσα ἄνθρωπος ποιεῖ καὶ πάσχει· περὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῷον ταῦτα, τὸ κοινόν, καὶ κοινόν, ὡς εἴρηται.

56 I 1 [53] 9, 4–6 (O'Daly): Ἀλλ' εἰ δόξα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ διάνοια, πῶς ἀναμάρτητος; Ψευδὴς γὰρ δόξα καὶ πολλὰ κατ' αὐτὴν πράττεται τῶν κακῶν.

logismoi the *energêmata* of the soul.[57] But now he raises the question whether opinion (*doxa*) and rational thought (*dianoia*) should be ascribed to the soul. The validity of the objection is based more on *doxa* than on *dianoia* because Plotinus underlines its deceit and names it cause of evils.[58] If this faculty, *doxa*, belonged to the soul, the soul would not be faultless as opinion often implies falsehood. The answer is implicit: Opinion is not to be ascribed to the soul; the soul is impassible and free from error. Thus, everything bad has to be attributed to a different level, to the human being or rather to the "we":

> Now evils are done when we are overcome by what is worse—for we are multiple—by desire or anger or an evil image. And so-called thinking what is false, which is an imagination, has not waited for the judgment of the reasoning faculty, but we have acted, persuaded by what is worse, just as in the case of perception, it happens that the common perception sees falsely, before the reasoning faculty passes judgment.[59]

The soul is not subject to bad actions, but "we" are. "We" succumb to what is worse, especially to the *pathêmata*, but also to deceptions which are based on a lack of criticism in the capacity of thought. The reason for this weakness and lack of self-assertion is the multiplicity of the "we": "for we are multiple (*polla gar hêmeis*)."[60] The *hêmeis* itself is not simple, and even though its central place is thought, as Plotinus had said before, the other faculties that belong to it can impede its access to or employment of proper thoughts.[61] In order to further determine what "we" are, Plotinus comes back to "our" relation to what is above.

> The intellect is either in contact, or not, and thus free from error. Perhaps, though, one should put it as follows: that we are in contact with the intel-

57 Cf. p. 133.

58 Cf. Gurtler 1988, 234–235 who assumes that Plotinus distinghishes between "false reasonings" and "true reasoning."

59 I 1 [53] 9, 6–12 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Ἡ πράττεται μὲν τὰ κακὰ ἡττωμένων ἡμῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ χείρονος—πολλὰ γὰρ ἡμεῖς—ἢ ἐπιθυμίας ἢ θυμοῦ ἢ εἰδώλου κακοῦ· ἡ δὲ τῶν ψευδῶν λεγομένη διάνοια φαντασία οὖσα οὐκ ἀνέμεινε τὴν τοῦ διανοητικοῦ κρίσιν, ἀλλ' ἐπράξαμεν τοῖς χείροσι πεισθέντες, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως πρὶν τῷ διανοητικῷ ἐπικρῖναι ψευδῆ ὁρᾶν συμβαίνει τῇ κοινῇ αἰσθήσει.

60 Cf. VI 7 [38] 41, 22–25 for an account of multiplicity, but without the usage of the term "we."

61 Contra Morel who merely speaks about the "caractère équivoque de l'expression" and assumes that Plotinus just points out the "imprécision du langage commun" (Morel 1999, 62).

> ligible in Intellect, or not. Or rather, with the intelligible in us: for one can have it and not have it to hand.[62]

The *hêmeis* can ascend towards the intellect and "be in contact" with the intelligible (*noêton*) in the intellect. The connection to the intellect—to the intellect itself or the intellect "in us"—is not always present to human beings; it is never lost, but not always "to hand,"[63] not always activated.[64] It is, of course, the soul's ultimate goal to make this connection stable and shift the focus of the "we" to this level.

After these reflections on "us," the soul and the human being, Plotinus comes back to a conclusion regarding the attribution of different faculties to the soul and to the living being.[65] *Pathêmata* and *doxa* belong to the common entity, to the realm of the body; intellectual activity belongs to the soul alone. Plotinus had linked the *dianoia* to the *doxa* at the beginning of the chapter, but he had connected it to the soul before, and he underlines its high character again at the end of chapter 9:

> and reasoning, making a judgment on the impressions produced from sensation, is already seeing forms, and seeing them, so to speak, self-consciously—at any rate, the reasoning, in the proper sense, of the true soul does. For true reasoning is the actualization of intellections and often involves a likeness and community between what is outside and what is within.[66]

---

62 I 1 [53] 9, 12–15 (O'Daly): Ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἢ ἐφήψατο ἢ οὔ, ὥστε ἀναμάρτητος. Ἢ οὕτω δὲ λεκτέον, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἢ ἐφηψάμεθα τοῦ ἐν τῷ νῷ νοητοῦ ἢ οὔ. Ἢ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν· δυνατὸν γὰρ καὶ ἔχειν καὶ μὴ πρόχειρον ἔχειν.

63 Plotinus may think of the image of the aviary in Plato's *Theaetetus* where Plato distinguishes between two ways of knowing something. In the first, one has acquired the knowledge and put it like a bird into the aviary of one's mind, while the second means to hold it in one's hand and contemplate it, and twice, Plato uses the word *procheiron* ("to hand") in this context (198d7; 200c2).

64 Cf. chapter IV.2 (73–78).

65 I 1 [53] 9, 15–18 (O'Daly): "So then, we have distinguished between the common activities and the ones peculiar to soul, in that the former are bodily, or cannot exist without body; but what does not require body for its actualization is peculiar to soul;" Διείλομεν δὴ τὰ κοινὰ καὶ τὰ ἴδια τῷ τὰ μὲν σωματικὰ καὶ οὐκ ἄνευ σώματος εἶναι, ὅσα δὲ οὐ δεῖται σώματος εἰς ἐνέργειαν, ταῦτα ἴδια ψυχῆς εἶναι.

66 I 1 [53] 9, 18–23 (O'Daly): καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐπίκρισιν ποιουμένην τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰσθήσεως τύπων εἴδη ἤδη θεωρεῖν καὶ θεωρεῖν οἷον συναισθήσει, τήν γε κυρίως τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς ἀληθοῦς διάνοιαν· νοήσεων γὰρ ἐνέργεια ἡ διάνοια ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ τῶν ἔξω πολλάκις πρὸς τἄνδον ὁμοιότης καὶ κοινωνία.

Plotinus closely binds *dianoia* to *noêsis*; reason or at least "true reasoning" is linked to the intellect and separated from affections, opinions and everything else that belongs to the lower form of the soul.[67] This determination allows us to distinguish again between the "soul" and "us":

> So the soul will nonetheless stay calm, concentrated upon itself and in itself. The changes and the tumult in us arise from what has become attached and, as has been described, from the affections of the common entity, whatever this is.[68]

The soul is quiet in itself and is not subject to anything else. There is, however, unrest "in us (*en hêmin*)," as "we" are not separated from the *koinon* and therefore subject to its affections (*pathêmata*).[69] "We" are clearly distinct from the soul, and "we" are multiple in the sense that there is "tumult" in us and not merely clear reasoning or calm intellection.[70] This "tumult" and the impact the body, affections and passions can have on "us" lead to the fact that "we" may think and act badly. "We" are responsible for bad actions, and it is as Plotinus underlined in III 1 [3][71] important that "we" assume this responsibility in order to improve and ascend.

5 We Are Double

Chapter 10 describes the "we" not as multiple, but as double. This may seem as a simplification of the multiple character, but it does not, I think, reduce the multiplicity to a simple duality.[72] He certainly, however, tries to establish a proper hierarchy in the levels of self,[73] but he is aware of the various options of the *hêmeis*, for the good and for the bad.[74]

---

67 Cf. Aubry 2004, 271.

68 I 1 [53] 9, 23–26 (O'Daly): Ἀτρεμήσει οὖν οὐδὲν ἧττον ἡ ψυχὴ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῇ· αἱ δὲ τροπαὶ καὶ ὁ θόρυβος ἐν ἡμῖν παρὰ τῶν συνηρτημένων καὶ τῶν τοῦ κοινοῦ, ὅ τι δήποτέ ἐστι τοῦτο, ὡς εἴρηται, παθημάτων.

69 On the other occurrences of *thorybos* in Plotinus and the Platonic sources for the usage of this image see Stock 2019 and p. 35, note 64.

70 This "multiplicity" is thus very different from the "multiple personalities" Clark 1991 discusses.

71 Cf. III 1 [3] 4, 24–28. Cf. above p. 41.

72 Contra Aubry 2004, 273–278; Aubry 2020, 214.

73 Cf. Aubry 2020, 213.

74 Aubry 2020, 212, 218.

Although Plotinus had distinguished between the soul and the *hêmeis* at the end of chapter 9, he raises the following objection at the beginning of chapter 10:

> But if we are the soul, and we are affected in this manner, it would be the soul that is affected in this manner, and again it will do what we do.[75]

Plotinus raises an important objection against his idea of the *hêmeis* which stems again from a tension between the tradition of the *Alcibiades 1* where "we," soul and (true) human being are identified and the common ascription of *pathêmata* to the "we."[76] The argument is the following:

(1) We = (rational) soul (according to *Alcibiades 1*)
(2) "we are affected in this manner" (according to everyday experience)
→ The (rational) soul is affected in this manner (and does what we do)

This argument is correct, but the conclusion is false, since Plotinus assumes that the soul is *apathês*. One option would be to attack the second premise:

(1) We = (rational) soul (according to *Alcibiades 1*)
~~(2) "we are affected in this manner" (according to everyday experience)~~
~~→ The (rational) soul is affected in this manner (and does what we do)~~

Our usual way of speaking that presents us a the subjects of affections and perceptions would then be merely an imprecise and un-philosophical way of speaking, and "we" would have to signify "we ourselves"—as it does indeed in the *Alcibiades 1*. Plotinus, however, chooses to attack the first premise:

(1) ~~We = (rational) soul (according to *Alcibiades 1*)~~
(2) "we are affected in this manner" (according to everyday experience)
→ ~~The (rational) soul is affected in this manner (and does what we do)~~

According to Plotinus, we should not give up the premise which states that "we" are affected by what affects our body, and he thus challenges the identification of the "we" with the impassible and flawless soul. Plotinus points out what "we" are and not what "we ourselves" are. The latter is obviously the higher soul or even intellect, but the more interesting term is *hêmeis*, i.e. "we" in a broader sense. Our usual way of speaking in which we speak of "us" as the ones who are

75 I 1 [53] 10, 1–3 (O'Daly): Ἀλλ' εἰ ἡμεῖς ἡ ψυχή, πάσχομεν δὲ ταῦτα ἡμεῖς, ταῦτα ἂν εἴη πάσχουσα ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ αὖ ποιήσει ἃ ποιοῦμεν.

76 Cf. O'Daly 2017, 144–145.

affected is not an un- or pre-philosophical way of speaking in need of philosophical correction; we do not merely have to redefine "we" to "we ourselves" to accomplish the task. We first have to understand what "we" are in the broader sense, in our everyday way of speaking and thinking because this is what "we" are or "what we think we are" when "we" start philosophizing. And without a good understanding of the starting point of those who philosophize, it is not clear what needs to be done to make the "we" become "we ourselves" which is the goal of the ascent. It is thus of vital importance to understand "what we think we are" when "we" are in the sensible realm. Thus again Plotinus has to explain what *hêmeis* is:

> Now we said that the common entity also is ours, and especially when we have not yet been separated: for what affects our body, we say too that it affects us. So the 'we' is double, either with the animal included, or what even now is above this: the animal is the body endowed with life.[77]

Plotinus does not speak of a knowledge free of affection as in IV 4 [28];[78] he ascribes *paschein* to the "we." Plotinus' explanation goes back to everyday language and experience: "We" say that "we" experience what "our" body experiences. It is, as I said in my introduction, unusual for a Platonic philosopher to invoke everyday language like this, but Plotinus does not want to discredit the level of everyday language as a mere pre-stage, but he takes its inherent judgment seriously. Thus it is more than a mere "homonymie du terme 'nous.'".[79] And if it is correct that "we" suffer pain and not just "our" bodies, then "we" are not identical to the impassible soul. In chapter 9 Plotinus had said: *polla gar hêmeis*, and there he was mainly interested in pointing out that not only thought belongs to the "we," but also affections and passions; he did not mention the body. Here the body is included into the "we" which is said to be double (*ditton*). It can either be the higher soul or include "the animal," i.e. "the body endowed with life"—the notion "animal" does not, as in Plato's simile, refer to the desiring part (*epithymêtikon*), but to the living body.[80]

---

77 I 1 [53] 10, 3–7 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Ἦ καὶ τὸ κοινὸν ἔφαμεν ἡμῶν εἶναι καὶ μάλιστα οὔπω κεχωρισμένων· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἃ πάσχει τὸ σῶμα ἡμῶν ἡμᾶς φαμεν πάσχειν. Διττὸν οὖν τὸ ἡμεῖς, ἢ συναριθμουμένου τοῦ θηρίου, ἢ τὸ ὑπὲρ τοῦτο ἤδη· θηρίον δὲ ζῳωθὲν τὸ σῶμα.

78 Cf. IV 4 [28] 19, 26–29.

79 Contra Laurent 1999a, 89.

80 Contra Laurent 1999a, 89, who writes that *thêrion* "vise très vraisemblablement à désigner l'âme sensitive."

However, the double character of the "we" is or is not meant to be a permanent and static state. Plotinus tells his readers that "we" may designate both the soul with the common entity or just the soul, but he strongly encourages them to shift the focus of the "we" to this soul which he describes, again, in Platonic terms:

> But the true human being is other, pure of these things, possessing the virtues in intellection, those, that is, seated in the separating soul itself, separating and separate while still here.[81]

Plotinus uses the distinction of the inner and outer human being from Plato's image of the soul in the *Republic*.[82] The true human being is associated with the soul that separates itself from the body already in life. The main motif stems from Plato's dialogue *Phaedo* where Plato presents the pure soul as the one who is free from the body already during the life in the body.[83] The soul can turn towards the body and its affections, can be polluted and affected by them, but it also has the capacity of keeping itself free of the body during lifetime.

Plotinus' readers are certainly encouraged to shift their focus to the higher soul, but the shift of the "we" to the higher soul is not a correction of a wrong way of speaking about what "we" are. Our usual way of speaking, which attributes to "us" what happens to our body, reveals that "we" are not a simple entity. And this acknowledgement of our duality or plurality conveys on the one hand a better understanding of ourselves in this world; on the other hand, it is necessary for us to understand our starting point for the ascent. If "we" do not acknowledge "our" duality or multiplicity "we" cannot ascend as "we" would fail to assume the responsibility for what "we" are.

6 Consciousness

The topic of consciousness is, as several chapters have shown, at the center of Plotinus' conception of the "we." In I 1 [53], the topic is addressed when Plotinus compares what "we" as adults are, compared to children and animals. Plotinus first speaks about children:

---

81 I 1 [53] 10, 7–10 (O'Daly, slightly revised): Ὁ δ' ἀληθὴς ἄνθρωπος ἄλλος ὁ καθαρὸς τούτων τὰς ἀρετὰς ἔχων τὰς ἐν νοήσει αἳ δὴ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ χωριζομένῃ ψυχῇ ἵδρυνται, χωριζομένῃ δὲ καὶ χωριστῇ ἔτι ἐνταῦθα οὔσῃ·

82 Cf. *Rep*. 588c–589a.

83 Plato, *Phd*. pass., e.g. 64e–65a, 66d–67d.

> When we are children, what comes from the composite is active, and little shines upon it from the things above. But when ⟨what is above⟩ is inactive towards us it is active towards what is above it. And it is active towards us when it reaches the middle ⟨part⟩.[84]

Children are not yet capable of employing the higher functions of *dianoia* and *noêsis*. Plotinus describes this as a lack of illumination from above, but in a strict sense, we would have to say that the higher can only be called "inactive" in the sense that it does not reach the middle part because the middle part is not capable of receiving it. The higher part is never "inactive," but the middle part, that is our center of consciousness, can turn its attention towards the higher or the lower.

Plotinus does not give a reason for the difference between children and adults in this passage, but we can assume that it is the disturbance of birth from Plato's *Timaeus*, which he mentions, for instance, in III 4 [15].[85] When a child grows up, it develops virtues, tames the emotions and makes room for higher faculties, especially for rational thought, but this development is not Plotinus' focus. He is thinking of consciousness und of unconscious faculties und thus immediately inquires about whether there is something higher.

> What? Are we not also what is before this? But there must be conscious awareness. For we do not always use all that we have, but only when we direct the middle part either toward what is above or toward the opposite, whatever, that is, we are bringing from potentiality or disposition to actuality.[86]

Plotinus establishes again that there are faculties that are unconscious even though they belong to "us." When he had spoken about unconscious faculties before, Plotinus had mainly used this terminology to explain why we are not aware of the fact that we have the undescended soul or the intelligible cosmos in us. Here, the context is the development of a human being and the question of why or rather in what sense human beings can lack functions that are prop-

---

84 I 1 [53] 11, 1–4 (O'Daly): Παίδων δὲ ὄντων ἐνεργεῖ μὲν τὰ ἐκ τοῦ συνθέτου, ὀλίγα δὲ ἐλλάμπει ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰς αὐτό. Ὅταν δ' ἀργῇ εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἐνεργεῖ πρὸς τὸ ἄνω· εἰς ἡμᾶς δὲ ἐνεργεῖ, ὅταν μέχρι τοῦ μέσου ἥκῃ.

85 III 4 [15] 6, 6. Cf. Stock 2020, 208.

86 I 1 [53] 11, 4–8 (O'Daly): Τί οὖν; Οὐχ ἡμεῖς καὶ πρὸ τούτου; Ἀλλ' ἀντίληψιν δεῖ γενέσθαι· οὐ γάρ, ὅσα ἔχομεν, τούτοις χρώμεθα ἀεί, ἀλλ' ὅταν τὸ μέσον τάξωμεν ἢ πρὸς τὰ ἄνω ἢ πρὸς τὰ ἐναντία, ἢ ὅσα ἀπὸ δυνάμεως ἢ ἕξεως εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἄγομεν.

erly human. Faculties have to be used, and children do not use them (yet), and even adult human beings may not always use and activate them—one example are the "mad persons" mentioned above.

By comparing adult human beings to children and to animals, Plotinus points out what it is that makes a human being human, i.e. the activation of rational thought. Animals live below the level of reason. In this context, Plotinus advances a theory as to how animals come to be and distinguishes two cases: Animals can be mere animals, or they can be the result of the reincarnation of a fallen human soul. If they are simple animals they became what they are "by illumination from the world-soul."[87] But if they came to be by having a human soul that erred and is now reincarnated in an animal, the higher part of this human soul "does not belong to the animal, but, being present, is not present to them."[88] Their bodies are alive because of the image of this human soul, i.e. its lower functions, but the animal does not have any access to the higher function of that same soul. No animal thus possesses rational thought, "their consciousness includes the image of soul and the body."[89] Animals and human beings share, however, that they are living beings. Children are a second interesting case. They are human beings, but their center of consciousness is directed to lower functions; they have the capacity of developing reason, but do not live on this level yet and their lower functions have more influence on what they think and do. Growing-up is thus a process of shifting the focus of consciousness away from the body and bodily functions, away from what we share with animals, to rationality and responsibility for our actions. Grown-up human beings can—and should—shift their attention to higher faculties—but this is, of course, not an automatic and necessary development, and it depends on the specific soul whether the shift will take place. Many adults are as prone to succumbing to passions as children. The higher functions can thus be "present without being present" in adult human beings, that is they can be there and active in themselves without being received by the conscious center of the soul.[90] Such human beings would act badly because they would let external effects determine what they think, do and

87 I 1 [53] 11, 13–15 (O'Daly, slightly revised): … ἐλλάμψει ἀπὸ τῆς ὅλης …

88 I 1 [53] 11, 10–11 (O'Daly): … οὐ τῶν θηρίων γίνεται τοῦτο, ὅσον χωριστόν, ἀλλὰ παρὸν οὐ πάρεστιν αὐτοῖς, …

89 I 1 [53] 11, 11–13 (Armstrong): … ἡ συναίσθησις τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς εἴδωλον μετὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔχει·

90 Plotinus also uses the formulation "present without being present (πάρεστιν οὖν καὶ τὸ φυτικὸν οὐ παρὸν)" in III 4 [15] 4, 12. On this notion see also Adamson 2017 and Stock 2020, 179–181.

are. What they should do is shift their center of consciousness to rationality—and eventually to Intellect—in order to become better and improve themselves.

7 We or the Soul?

At the beginning of treatise I 1 [53], when he announces the plan of study for his treatise, Plotinus includes one very unusual question: "this very thing that enquires: what might it be that makes the investigation and judgment about these matters?"[91] Most philosophical texts do not rise to this level of self-reflection, and it may even seem like hairsplitting and the answer obvious. But there is, at least, some kind of precedent in the Platonic tradition, in the *Alcibiades I* where Socrates tries to determine what "we" are in order to understand what it means to take care of oneself: What is the object and subject of this care (*epimeleia*)? Plotinus' overall aim is similar to what we see in the *Alcibiades I*, but he does not merely ask about the care of oneself, but about the investigation undertaken in this treatise.[92] The answer to the questions concerns the general conception of philosophy, Plotinus reflects on the subject and the addressee of philosophical investigations and on the effect philosophy has on those who philosophize:

> That which has investigated these matters—is it we or the soul? Well, it is we, but with the soul. In what way, 'with the soul'? Is it that it investigated because it has soul? No, rather inasmuch as it is soul.[93]

Plotinus first distinguishes soul and "we," then establishes the "we" as the investigating subject, but ends with the "we" being soul. However, these few lines contain a subtle definition of the "we" as the subject of philosophy. "We" and the soul are not identical, and the subject of philosophy is the "we," and not the soul. Those who philosophize are not merely souls or even rational souls, but they are human beings or, to be more exact, they are embodied beings

91 I 1 [53] 1, 9–11 (O'Daly): καὶ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ ἐπισκοποῦν καὶ περὶ τούτων τὴν ζήτησιν καὶ τὴν κρίσιν ποιούμενον τί ποτ' ἂν εἴη.

92 My interpretation of this question thus differs from Aubry's who focuses on the "grasp of the self" (Aubry 2020, 214) and not on the answer which defines the *hêmeis* as the subject of philosophy.

93 I 1 [53] 13, 1–3 (O'Daly): Τὸ δὲ ἐπισκεψάμενον περὶ τούτων ἡμεῖς ἢ ἡ ψυχή; Ἡ ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ. Τὸ δὲ τῇ ψυχῇ πῶς; Ἆρα τῷ ἔχειν ἐπεσκέψατο; Ἢ ἧ ψυχή.

who strive both to learn and to form themselves and to lift themselves up to the higher realm. Thus, Plotinus affirms that the philosophical investigation is the process of an identification of the *hêmeis* with the rational soul. Whoever undertakes such an investigation turns his or her attention away from the body and the lower functions of the soul and towards the soul and the intellect. "We" are not, in general, our rational soul, but when "we" philosophize, this is the exact identification we attempt to complete.[94] "We" aim to be on the level of rational thought. The ascent of philosophical investigations does not, however, end on the level of rational thought, but it transcends it towards the intellect.

> And intellection is ours in the sense that the soul is intellectual, and intellection is a superior life, both when the soul intelligizes, and when Intellect directs its activity toward us. For Intellect too is a part of us and toward this we shall ascend.[95]

The subject of *noêsis* was, of course, one of the questions raised at the beginning of the treatise, and Plotinus had already addressed it in the course of the treatise. But he comes back to intellectual thought at the end because it is connected to the topic of the subject of philosophy. Even though the central human faculty is often described as rational thought, Plotinus describes the soul here as "intellectual (*noera*)," that is as capable of intellectual thought. After having reached the level of rational thought "we" should therefore continue our ascent towards intellect, which is "part of us," but it is also that toward which "we" ascend. The treatise thus concludes with "our ascent" to the intellect. These last words have been interpreted as the deep sigh of a philosopher who is close to death and his final ascent to intellect.[96] However, the ascent is also the goal for "us" as the readers of the treatise.[97] The text is supposed to be "efficacious."[98] Philosophy is thus presented as the movement of identification of the *hêmeis* first with the rational soul and finally as the movement towards the intellect. In

94 My interpretation which underlines the process of identification thus differs from Aubry's who assumes that the "sujet de la recherche philosophique" is "le *hêmeis* en tant qu'il est devenu identique à la *dianoia*" (Aubry 2004, 333).

95 I 1 [53] 13, 5–8 (O'Daly): Καὶ ἡ νόησις δὲ ἡμῶν οὕτω, ὅτι καὶ νοερὰ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ ζωὴ κρείττων ἡ νόησις, καὶ ὅταν ψυχὴ νοῇ, καὶ ὅταν νοῦς ἐνεργῇ εἰς ἡμᾶς· μέρος γὰρ καὶ οὗτος ἡμῶν καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον ἄνιμεν.

96 Tornau 2001, 431, note 56.

97 On the last sentences cf. Ham 2000, 118. Ham does not discern a conflict with the statement that the Intellect is a "part of us," since it is also said that we ascend toward it. See also O'Daly 2017, 182–184. Differently Szlezák 1979, 168–169.

98 Aubry 2014, 314.

doing philosophy, "we" change our focus and direct it towards rational thought before moving upwards to intellective thought. Philosophy is a form of therapy of the soul, a transformation of the soul, or rather of "us" as "we" transform the "we" into "we ourselves," as "we" shift our center of consciousness from the lower to the higher realm and establish our center firmly on the level of rationality and start our ascent to Intellect itself.

Conclusion

In developing the language and style of philosophizing, philosophers have of course used abstract terms and even neologisms that puzzle the uninitiated, but another philosophical tendency is to examine and then redefine terms of common language: What is virtue? What is being? What is a human being? What is the beautiful? Both tendencies are important and help advance philosophical understanding. The first method creates a terminology for ideas and concepts which are not commonly found in our everyday language, but which are the results of philosophical investigations. The second method assumes that philosophical understanding can be advanced when we reflect on what we say with the words we use in our everyday language. This method assumes that we do not necessarily need new terms, but rather a better and deeper understanding of what we say when we speak.

Plotinus like the Platonic tradition is often interested in actual speech. The examination of "virtue" starts from the empirical: Socrates questions what people think and then turns his fierce, analytic eye upon their language and understanding. Ordinary language will not hold the answers but without it there is no dialogue. It is in this dialogue, in this encounter with everyday understanding that a term becomes repurposed as a philosophical term. Aristotle draws the common word "being" onto the examining table and starts to ask what it means, in what ways it is used and whether (or how) these meanings are connected. His reflections on this seemingly ordinary term led to the discipline of ontology.

In Plotinus' *Enneads* we can observe a similar development of a new philosophical term (yet without the creation of a new discipline). He starts thinking about what we mean when we say "we" and thus coins a new philosophical notion: "the we."[1] Plotinus' reflections start with the philosophical tradition, with his teaching and with everyday language. "We" in short becomes a subject of inquiry to bring these three areas together—not always with agreement and sure conclusions.

First of all, the word is used in the *Alcibiades 1*, in the context of a discussion about what "we ourselves" are, how to care for ourselves, what the human being is and what the soul. The *Alcibiades 1*, however, does not reflect on this notion, and he treats it as a synonym for "true human being" or "rational soul"—there is not yet an interest in the internal perspective this notion could open

1 I 1 [53] 10, 5 (my translation): τὸ ἡμεῖς.

© WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK, 2024 | DOI:10.1163/9789004678651_011

up as opposed to the more objective terms like "soul" or "human being." Plotinus' other sources for the usage of this term stem from his teaching situation and from everyday life, and they complicate the simple identifications of the *Alcibiades I*.

Secondly, the term "we" is commonly used by a teacher to encourage students to think and thus denotes those who philosophize. And the use of the term in oral teaching has in turn influenced the written form of the treatises: Plotinus' teaching is dialogical, and his dialogical teaching is reflected in the form of his writings.[2] Thus, *hêmeis* is "school language,"[3] but not only in the sense of a notion coined in a philosophical school, but in the sense of oral teaching and the effort to create a kind of inquiring philosophical solidarity. This usage emphasizes the internal perspective: when we think about human beings and souls, we do not do this from an external perspective, but "we" are investigating ourselves.

Thirdly, ordinary language use of "we" poses a greater challenge because we usually use "we" not in a restricted sense (what we truly are) as in the *Alcibiades I*, but we refer to ourselves as the subjects of sense-perceptions, passions, emotions, in short as embodied beings. Plotinus' surprising innovation is to take these attributions seriously. Everyday experiences and everyday language must be explained in order to understand what "we" are. In this sense, philosophy combines the problems handed down by philosophical tradition with an account of what "we" experience and how "we" speak about such experiences. In this sense, Plotinus is not only a speculative metaphysician or mystic, but a philosopher of "common sense."[4]

One of the great attractions of Plotinus is precisely this response to and effort to understand the phenomenology of psychic experience: E.R. Dodds once called him "a great psychologist."[5] Plotinus wants to understand what we mean when we say "we" and he reflects on what we think we are and not merely on what we truly are. As a result the "we" becomes a dynamic and fluid term.

---

2 On the dialogical teaching cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 13. Cf. also Beierwaltes 2011, 21. On the dialogical form cf. also Henry 1937, 325–326. Cf. Armstrong 1967, 211–221. Schwyzer points at the dialogical character of Plotinus' teaching (Schwyzer 1951, 482), even if the treatises are not transcriptions of dialogues (ibid. 528).

3 Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 1b, 387: "Schulsprache."

4 Contra Flasch 1965, v: "Platonism has never claimed to be a philosophy of common sense."

5 E.R. Dodds in the discussion of Schwyzer 1960, 386. Cf. 385: "I have sometimes felt that the most important contribution which Plotinus has made to European thought does not lie in his grandiose construction of the Three Hypostases, which for many of us can only be a magnificent dream, but rather in these more modest contributions to psychology. [...] I think he was an extremely acute psychological observer."

Thus, when we interpret Plotinus' attempts to understand "we" in its variety of meanings we cannot merely set aside certain passages as "ordinary usage" and thus irrelevant for the construction of a theory of the "we."[6] And it is also impossible merely to distinguish between two or three forms of self. Such a distinction is too static because it does not take into account the multiplicity of the "we" and its dynamic fluidity. Furthermore, such a distinction raises the question of the identity and connection of these seemingly separate selves. In Plotinus, however, there is one subject which is dynamic and can turn its attention to various levels of the self. It is, however, not a separate new entity, apart from the soul or the human person, but it is a first person perspective used by this human being or the soul.[7] Thus, Plotinus' ideas on what "we" are (or rather what we think we are) are certainly connected to theories of self, the "I" or the person since Plotinus contributes to debates about self-consciousness, inner perception and the definition of the "inner true human being" and the complete human being.[8] But Plotinus does not use the same terminology and does not cover the exact same field. His theory of "the we" addresses and combines a variety of issues in a number of philosophical disciplines, especially metaphysics, epistemology, anthropology and ethics. The question of "the we" is clearly a metaphysical question since "we" are denizens of the sensible realm insofar as "we" are embodied beings and of the intelligible realm insofar as it is our true homeland. "We" are connected to the One and Intellect, we are meant to return to the intelligible realm and even unite with the One. Plotinus' most important contribution to the discipline of epistemology is his theory of conscious and unconscious parts of the soul and of our ability or inability to shift our focus of consciousness. Plotinus' anthropology is dynamic, i.e. it shows, by the usage of the dynamic term of the "we," that human beings are capable of a variety of functions, that they are part of the cosmos, but that they have a variety of functions and capabilities, including the capability to return to the intelligible realm. Furthermore, Plotinus emphasizes the internal perspective when he favors the term "we" over other more object terms, which describe human beings from the external perspective (human being, living being, body,

6 Remes, for instance does not quote passages from I 1 [53] where Plotinus speaks of sense-perception and affections of the "we," tacitly assuming that they are not relevant for her study which focuses on the two forms of the self.

7 Cory 2021, 91, 98 makes a similar point about Aquinas' use of the "I." Aquinas' usage of the first person perspective is, however, not as dynamic and fluid as Plotinus'.

8 On debates about the self, person, ancient and modern, cf. Taylor 1989; Gallaher 2011; Kobusch 1993; Nickl and Terizakis 2010; Crone and Schnepf and Stolzenberg 2010. Cf. p. 6–11 and Stock 2024c.

soul, etc.). Instead of treating the investigation into human beings like any other investigation, Plotinus takes into account that when we think about what human beings are, we are thinking about ourselves, about what "we" are. And such an investigation is never merely objective: "we" are not only interested in understanding what "we" *are*, but also in what "we" want or should *become*. Plotinus thus establishes this "we" also as the ethical agent and develops a more nuanced account of the subject which aims for the good, but can fail. And all these different aspects belong to a full consideration of what "we" are or of what we think we are—because it is especially this self-reflexive and self-conscious moment that drives Plotinus' investigation: What do we mean when we say "we"? His answers are not straightforward and not necessarily altogether clear, but they certainly make us think by including us not into a well-constructed system, but into lively philosophizing.[9]

9 Cf. Armstrong 1990, 179, quoted above p. 1.

Bibliography

Editions of Plotinus' *Enneads*

Plotini opera. edd. P. Henry & H.-R. Schwyzer, 3 vols. Paris/Brussels: Museum Lessianum, 1951–1973. [HS^1]

Plotini Opera. edd. P. Henry & H.-R. Schwyzer, 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964–1982. [HS^2]

Addenda et corrigenda ad textum et apparatum lectionum. In: *Plotini Opera*. edd. P. Henry & H.-R. Schwyzer, vol. 3. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, 304–325. [Addenda]

Translations of Plotinus' *Enneads*

Ennéades. Texte établi et traduit par Émile Bréhier. Deuxième édition. 6 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1954.

Plotins Schriften. Neubearbeitung mit griechischem Lesetext und Anmerkungen, übersetzt von Richard Harder. Fortgeführt von Rudolf Beutler und Willy Theiler, 6 vol. Hamburg: Meiner, 1956–1971.

Enneads. With an English translation by A.H. Armstrong in seven volumes. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: Harvard University Press/Heinemann, 1966–1988.

Enéadas I–II. Introducciones, traducciones y notas de Jesús Igal. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1982.

Enéadas III–IV. Introducciones, traducciones y notas de Jesús Igal. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1985.

Enneadi. A cura di Giuseppe Faggin. Testo greco a fronte. Milano: Rusconi, 1992.

Traité 9. VI 9. Introduction, traduction, commentaire et notes par Pierre Hadot. Paris: Cerf, 1994.

Ausgewählte Schriften. Herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Christian Tornau. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001.

Traités 1–6; 7–21; 22–26; 27–29; 30–37; 38–41; 42–44; 45–50; 51–54. Traductions sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau. Paris: GF Flammarion, 2002–2010.

Enneadi. Traduzione di Roberto Radice. Saggio introduttivo, prefazioni e note di commento di Giovanni Reale. Porfirio, 'Vita di Plotino' a cura di Giuseppe Girgenti. Milano: Mondadori, 2003.

Traité 53. I, 1. Introduction, traduction, commentaire et notes par Gwenaëlle Aubry (Les écrits de Plotin). Paris: Cerf, 2004.

Che cos'è l'essere vivente e che cos'è l'uomo? I 1 [*53*]. Introduzione, testo greco, traduzione

e commento di Carlo Marzolo. Prefazione di Cristina d'Ancona. Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006.

Εννεάς Τρίτη. Αρχαίο κείμενο, μετάφραση, σχόλια, Paulos Kalligas. 2nd ed. Athens: Κέντρον Ερεύνης της Ελληνικής και Λατινικής Γραμματείας, 2010.

Ennead IV. 8: On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies: Translation with an introduction and commentary, Barrie Fleet. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ., 2012.

Ennead IV.3-IV.4.29: Problems Concerning the Soul. Translation with an introduction and commentary, John M. Dillon and H.J. Blumenthal. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ., 2015.

Ennead VI.4 and VI.5: On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole. Transl. with an introd. and commentary, Eyjólfur K. Emilsson and Steven K. Strange. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ., 2015.

Ennead V.1. On the Three Primary Levels of Reality. Translation with an introduction and commentary, Eric D. Perl. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ., 2015.

Ennead IV.4.30–45 & IV.5. Translation with an introduction and commentary, Gary M. Gurtler. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ., 2015.

Ennead I.6: On Beauty. Translation, with an introduction, and commentary, Andrew Smith. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ., 2016.

Ennead I.1: What is the living thing? What is man? Translated with an introduction and commentary, Gerard O'Daly. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ., 2017.

Ennead VI.8. On the Voluntary and on the Free Will of the One. Transl. with an introduction and commentary, Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ., 2017.

Ennead II. 9. Against the Gnostics. Translation with an Introduction, Commentary Sebastian Gertz. Las Vegas: Parmenides., 2017.

The Enneads. Edited by Lloyd P. Gerson. Translated by L.P. Gerson, George Boys-Stones, John M. Dillon, R.A.H. King, Andrew Smith, James Wilberding. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Ennead V.8: On Intelligible Beauty. Translation, with an Introduction, and Commentary, Andrew Smith. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ., 2018

Ennead III.4: On our Allotted Guardian Spirit. Translated with an introduction and commentary, Wiebke-Marie Stock. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ., 2020.

Ennead VI.9: On the Good or the One. Translated by Stephen R.L. Clark. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing., 2020.

Ancient Authors

Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De an.*:

I. Bruns, *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis praeter commentaria scripta minora. Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* suppl. 2.1. Berlin: Reimer, 1887.

Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *De l'âme*. Texte grec introduit, traduit et annoté par Martin Bergeron et Richard Dufour. Paris: Vrin, 2008.

Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato*:

I. Bruns, *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis praeter commentaria scripta minora. Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* suppl. 2.2. Berlin: Reimer, 1892.

Alexander von Aphrodisias, *Über das Schicksal*. Übersetzt und kommentiert von Andreas Zierl. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995.

Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Fate*. Text, translation and commentary by R.W. Sharples. London: Duckworth, 1983.

Alexandre d'Aphrodise, *Traité du destin*. Texte établi et traduit par Pierre Thiellet. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984.

Aristotle, *De an.*:

Aristoteles, *De anima*. Edited by W.D. Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Aristotle, *On the soul. Parva naturalia. On Breath*. Translated by W.S. Hett. Loeb Classical Library 288. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Aristotle, *De mem.*:

Aristotle, *De sensu and De memoria*. Text and translated with introduction and commentary by G.R.T. Ross. New York: Arno Press, 1973.

Aristotle, *On Memory and Recollection*. Text, Translation, Interpretation and Reception in Western Scholasticism by David Bloch. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007.

Aristotle, *EN*:

I. Bywater, *Aristotelis ethica Nicomachea*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894 (repr. 1962).

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 73. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.

(Pseudo-)Aristotle, *Magna moralia*:

F. Susemihl, *Aristotle* (ed. G.C. Armstrong), vol. 18. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935 (repr. 1969).

Epictetus, *Ench.*:

H. Schenkl, *Epicteti dissertationes ab Arriano digestae*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1916

Epictetus, *Discourses, Books 3–4. Fragments. The Encheiridion*. Translated by W.A. Oldfather. Loeb Classical Library 218. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.

Euripides, *fr.*:

Nauck, A. *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1889 (repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1964).

Homer, *Il.*:

T.W. Allen, *Homeri Ilias*, vols. 2–3. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.

Homer, *Iliad*, Volume I: Books 1–12. Volume II: Books 13–24. Translated by A.T. Murray. Revised by William F. Wyatt. Loeb Classical Library 170 and 171. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924–1925.

Homer, *Od.*:

P. von der Mühll, *Homeri Odyssea*. Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1962.

Homer, *Odyssey*, Volume I: Books 1–12. Translated by A.T. Murray. Revised by George E. Dimock. Volume II: Books 13–24. Translated by A.T. Murray. Revised by George E. Dimock. Loeb Classical Library 104 and 105. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1919.

Olympiodorus, *In Alc.*:

Olympiodorus, *On Plato : First Alcibiades 10–28*. Translated by Michael J. Griffin. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

Plato, *Politeia* (*Rep.*), *Alkibiades I* (*Alc. I*), *Phaidros* (*Phdr.*), *Phaidon* (*Phd.*), *Timaios* (*Tim.*), *Protagoras* (*Prot.*), *Philebos* (*Phil.*), *Theaetetus* (*Theat.*):

J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1–5 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900–1907 (repr. 1967, 1968).

Platon, *Werke, in acht Bänden, griechisch und deutsch*, deutsche Übersetzung von Friedrich Schleiermacher u.a. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990.

Plato, *Charmides. Alcibiades I and II. Hipparchus. The Lovers. Theages. Minos. Epinomis*. Translated by W.R.M. Lamb. Loeb Classical Library 201. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927.

Plato, *Laws*, Volume I: Books 1–6. Volume II: Books 7–12. Translated by R.G. Bury. Loeb Classical Library 187 and 192. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.

Plato, *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus*. Translated by Harold North Fowler. Loeb Classical Library 46. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977. [used only for the *Phaedrus*]

Plato, *Plato. Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo*. Edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones, William Preddy. Loeb Classical Library 36. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.

Plato, *Plato. Republic*, Volume I: Books 1–5. Volume II: Books 6–10. Edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones, William Preddy. Loeb Classical Library 237 and 276. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Plato, *Timaeus. Critias. Cleitophon. Menexenus. Epistles*. Translated by R.G. Bury. Loeb Classical Library 234. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929.

Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*:

Porphyry, *The Life of Plotinus* (*Vita Plotini*), In: *Plotinus. Enneads*. With an English translation by A.H. Armstrong in seven volumes. Vol. I. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: Harvard University Press/Heinemann, 1966.

Proclus, *ET*:

Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*. A revised text with translation, introduction and commentary by E.R. Dodds, 2. ed. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press, 1992.

Proclus, *In Parm*.

Proclus, *Procli philosophi opera inedita, pars tertia, continens Procli commentaria in Platonis Parmenidem*, ed. Victor Cousin. Hildesheim: Olms, 1961.

Proclus, *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, vol. I–III. Ed. C. Steel. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007–2009.

Proclus, *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*. Translated by G.R. Morrow and J.M. Dillon. With introduction and notes by J.M. Dillon. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Secondary Literature

Adamson, Peter. 2008. "Plotinus on Astrology." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* XXXV: 265–291.

Adamson, Peter. 2015. "Neoplatonism. The Last Ten Years." *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 9: 205–220.

Adamson, Peter. 2017. "'Present without being present': Plotinus on Plato's *daimôn*." In: *Rereading Ancient Philosophy: Old Chestnuts and Sacred Cows*, edited by Verity Harte and Raphael Woolf, 257–275. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aleknienė, Tatjana. 2016. *A l'approche du divin. Dialogues de Platon et tradition platonicienne*. Fribourg: Academic Press.

Alt, Karin. 1990. *Philosophie gegen Gnosis. Plotins Polemik in seiner Schrift II 9*. Mainz: Franz Steiner.

Annas, Julia. 1985. "Self-Knowledge in Early Plato." In: *Platonic Investigations*, edited by Dominic O'Meara, 111–138. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.

Armstrong, A.H. 1940. *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus*. Cambridge: The University Press.

Armstrong, A.H., ed. 1966–1988. *Plotinus. Enneads. With an English translation by A.H. Armstrong in seven volumes*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Armstrong, A.H. 1967. "Plotinus." In: *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A.H. Armstrong, 193–268. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Armstrong, A.H. 1973. "Elements in the thought of Plotinus as variance with classical Intellectualism." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93: 13–22.

Armstrong, A.H. 1976. "The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and Cosmos in Plotinus." In: *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, edited by R. Baine Harris, 187–198. Norfolk: State University of New York Press.

Armstrong, A.H. 1979a. "Form, Individual and Person in Plotinus." In: *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, XX, 49–68. London: Variorum Reprints.

Armstrong, A.H. 1979b. "Tradition, Reason and Experience in the Thought of Plotinus." In: *Plotinian and Christian Studies* XVII, 171–194. London: Variorum Reprints.

Armstrong, A.H. 1983. "Gottesschau (Visio beatifica)." *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* XII: 1–19.

Armstrong, A.H. 1990. "Platonic Mirrors." In: *Hellenic and Christian Studies, VI*, 147–181. Aldershot: Variorum.

Arp, Robert. 2004. "Plotinus, mysticism, and mediation." *Religious Studies* 40: 145–163.

Atkinson, Michael. 1983. *Plotinus, Ennead v. 1. On the Three Principal Hypostases*. A Commentary with translation by Michael Atkinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aubry, Gwenaëlle. 2004. *Plotin, Traité 53. 1, 1*. Introduction, traduction, commentaire et notes par Gwenaëlle Aubry (Les écrits de Plotin). Paris: Cerf.

Aubry, Gwenaëlle. 2008. "Un moi sans identité? Le *hèmeis* plotinien." In: *Le moi et l'intériorité*, edited by Gwenaëlle Aubry and Frédérique Ildefonse, 107–125. Paris: Vrin.

Aubry, Gwenaëlle. 2014. "Metaphysics of Soul and Self in Plotinus." In: *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*, edited by Pauliina Remes and Svetla Slaveva-Griffin, 310–322. London and New York: Routledge.

Aubry, Gwenaëlle. 2020. "An Alternative to Cartesianism? Plotinus's Self and its Posteriority in Ralph Cudworth." In: *Self-Knowledge in Ancient Philosophy: the Eighth Keeling Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, edited by Fiona Leight, 210–229. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Banner, Nicholas. 2017. "The Indeterminate Self and its Cultivation in Plotinus." In: *Selfhood and the Soul. Essays on Ancient Thought and Literature in Honour of Christopher Gill*, edited by Richard Seaford, John Wilkins, and Matthew Wright, 139–159. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barney, Rachel, Tad Brennan, and Charles Brittain, ed. 2012. *Plato and the Divided Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bartsch, Shadi, and David Wray, ed. 2009. *Seneca and the Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beckermann, Ansgar. 2010. "Die Rede von dem Ich und dem Selbst. Sprachwidrig und philosophisch höchst problematisch." In: *Über die Seele*, edited by Katja Crone, Robert Schnepf, and Jürgen Stolzenberg, 458–473. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 1974. "Reflexion und Einung. Zur Mystik Plotins." In: *Grundfragen der Mystik*, edited by Werner Beierwaltes, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Alois M. Haas, 7–36. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 1985. *Denken des Einen. Studien zur neuplatonischen Philosophie und ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte*. Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 1986. "The Love of Beauty and the Love of God." In: *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality. Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, edited by A.H. Armstrong, 293–313. New York: Crossroad.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 1987. "Plotins philosophische Mystik." In: *Grundfragen christlicher*

Mystik (*Mystik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Abteilung I. Band 5*), edited by M. Schmidt, 39–49. Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 1991. *Selbsterkenntnis und Erfahrung der Einheit. Plotins Enneade V 3. Text, Übersetzung, Interpretation, Erläuterungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 1999. "Causa sui. Plotins Begriff des Einen als Ursprung des Gedankens der Selbstursächlichkeit." In: *Traditions of Platonism. Essays in Honour of J. Dillon*, edited by J.J. Cleary, 191–226. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 2001. *Das wahre Selbst. Studien zu Plotins Begriff des Geistes und des Einen*. Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 2002. "Das Eine als Norm des Lebens. Zum metaphysischen Grund neuplatonischer Lebensform." In: *Metaphysik und Religion. Zur Signatur des spätantiken Denkens. Akten des Internationalen Kongresses vom 13.–17. März in Würzburg*, edited by Theo Kobusch, and Michael Erler, 121–151. München/Leipzig: Reuther & Reichard.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 2006. "Plotins philosophische Mystik und ihre Bedeutung für das Christentum." In: *Wege mystischer Gotteserfahrung: Judentum, Christentum und Islam = Mystical approaches to God : Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* edited by Peter Schäfer, 81–95. München: Oldenbourg.

Beierwaltes, Werner. 2011. *Fußnoten zu Platon*. Frankfurt a. Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

Berchman, Robert M. 2021. *Thinking on Thinking. Studies in Mind, Meaning, and Subjectivity*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications.

Bertozzi, Alberto. 2021. *Plotinus on Love: An Introduction to His Metaphysics through the Concept of Eros*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Bloch, David. 2007. *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection. Text, Translation, Interpretation and Reception in Western Scholasticism*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1966. "Did Plotinus Believe in Ideas of Individuals?" *Phronesis* 11 (1): 61–80.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1969. "Review of: Plotinus: The Road to Reality. By J.M. Rist." *Phoenix* 23 (3): 325–327.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1971a. *Plotinus' Psychology. His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*. The Hague: Nijhoff.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1971b. "Soul, World-Soul and individual soul in Plotinus." In: *Le néoplatonisme. Royaumont. 9–13 juin 1969*, 55–63. Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1976. "Plotinus' Adaptation of Aristotle's Psychology: Sensation, Imagination and Memory." In: *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, edited by R. Baine Harris, 41–58. Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1978. "Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self by Gerard J.P. O'Daly (Review)." *Gnomon* 50 (4): 407–410.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1987. "Plotinus in the Light of Twenty Years' Scholarship, 1951–1971." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 36.1: 528–570.

Blumenthal, Henry J. 1993. "Plotinus, *Enneads* V 3 (49). 3–4[1]." In: *Soul and Intellect. Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism*, 140–152. Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum.

Bobzien, Susanne. 1998. *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bolton, Robert. 1994. *Person, Soul, and Identity. A Neoplatonic Account of the Principle of Personality*. London: Minerva Press.

Bonazzi, Mauro. 2016. *Plotino, Sulla felicità. Traduzione e cura di Mauro Bonazzi. Testo a fronte*. Torino: Einaudi.

Borodai, T. Iu. 2003. "Plotinus's Critique of Gnosticism." *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 42 (1): 66–83.

Bréhier, Émile. 1999. *La philosophie de Plotin*. Paris: Vrin.

Brisson, Luc. 2005. *Plotin, Traités 27–29. Sur les difficultés relatives à l'âme, trois livres, présentés, traduits et annotés par L. Brisson*. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Brisson, Luc. 2006. "La place de la mémoire dans la psychologie plotinienne." In: *Études platoniciennes III. L'âme amphibie. Études sur l'âme selon Plotin*, 13–27. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Brisson, Luc, and Jérôme Laurent. 2002. "Notice, Notes (Traité 3)." In: *Plotin, Traités 1–6. Traductions sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 141–148, 160–168. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Brisson, Luc, and Jean-François Pradeau. 2002. "Notice, Notes (Traité 2)." In: *Plotin, Traités 1–6. Traductions sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 93–102, 126–140. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Brisson, Luc, and Jean-François Pradeau. 2003. "Notice, Notes (Traité 8)." In: *Plotin, Traités 7–21. Présentés, traduits et annotés par Luc Brisson, Jean-Michel Charrue, Richard Dufour, Jean-Marie Flamand, Francesco Fronterotta, Matthieu Guyot, Jérôme Laurent, Laurent Lavaud, Alain Petit et Jean-François Pradeau. Sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 35–41, 50–54. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Brunner, Fernand. 1973. "Le premier traité de la cinquième 'Ennéade': 'Des trois hypostases principielles'." *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* XXIII: 135–172.

Bussanich, John. 1994. "Mystical Elements in the Thought of Plotinus." In: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 36/7, 5300–5330. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

Bussanich, John. 1996. "Plotinus' Metaphysics of the One." In: *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, edited by Lloyd P. Gerson, 38–65. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bussanich, John. 1997. "Plotinian Mysticism in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (3): 339–365.

Caluori, Damian. 2008. "Plotin: Was fühlt der Leib? Was empfindet die Seele?" In: *Klas-*

sische Emotionstheorien. Von Platon bis Wittgenstein, edited by Hilge Landweer, and Ursula Renz, 124–140. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

Caluori, Damian. 2015. *Plotinus on the Soul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Caluori, Damian. 2020. "Plotinus on the World Soul." In: *World Soul—Anima Mundi: On the Origins and Fortunes of a Fundamental Idea*, edited by Christoph Helmig, 245–267. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Caluori, Damian. 2022. "The Embodied Soul." In: *The New Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, edited by Lloyd P. Gerson and James Wilberding, 219–240. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cary, Phillip. 2000. *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self. The Legacy of a Christian Platonist*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chiaradonna, Riccardo. 2005. "La dottrina dell'anima non discesa in Plotino e la conoscenza degli intelligibili." In: *Per una storia del concetto di mento*, edited by Eugenio Canone, 27–49. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore.

Chiaradonna, Riccardo. 2008. "Plotino: il 'noi' et il NOYΣ (Enn. V 3 [49], 8, 37–57)." In: *Le moi et l'intériorité*, edited by Gwenaëlle Aubry, and Frédérique Ildefonse, 277–293. Paris: Vrin.

Clark, Stephen R.L. 1991. "How many Selves make Me?" *Royal Institute of Philosophy supplement* 29: 213–233.

Clark, Stephen R.L. 2020. *Plotinus, Ennead VI.9: On the Good or the One. Translated by Stephen R.L. Clark*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing.

Corrigan, Kevin. 1994. "Ecstasy and Ectasy In Some Early Pagan and Christian Mystical Writings." In: *Greek and Medieval Studies in Honor of Leo Sweeney, S.J.*, edited by William J. Carroll, and John J. Furlong, 27–38. New York: Peter Lang.

Corrigan, Kevin. 1996. "'Solitary' Mysticism in Plotinus, Proclus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Pseudo-Dionysius." *The Journal of Religion* 76 (1): 28–42.

Corrigan, Kevin, and John D. Turner. 2017. *Plotinus, Ennead VI.8. On the Voluntary and on the Free Will of the One. Transl. with an introduction and commentary, Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ.

Cory, Therese Scarpelli. 2021. "Aquinas and 'I'. A medieval Concept of Self." In: *The self : a history*, edited by Patricia Kitcher, 73–98. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Crone, Katja, Robert Schnepf, and Jürgen Stolzenberg, ed. 2010. *Über die Seele*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

D'Ancona, Cristina, ed. 2003. *Plotino, La discesa dell'anima nei corpi* (*Enn. IV 8* [*6*]). *Plotiniana arabica* (*Pseudo-teologia di Aristotele, capitoli 1 E 7; 'detti del sapiente greco'*). Padova: Il Poligrafo.

D'Ancona, Cristina. 2006. "Plotino. *Che cos'è l'essere vivente et che cos'è l'uomo? 1 1* [*53*]? Il problema della relazione fra anima e corpa e l'inattesa soluzione di un platonico." In: *Plotino, Che cos'è l'essere vivente et che cos'è l'uomo? 1 1* [*53*]. *Introduzione, testo greco,*

traduzione e commento di Carlo Marzolo. Prefazione di Cristina d'Ancona, 3–33. Pisa: Edizioni Plus. Pisa University Press.

D'Ancona, Cristina. 2007. "Plotino: memoria di eventi e anamnesi di intelligibili." In: *Tracce nella mente. Teorie della memoria da Platone ai moderni*, edited by Maria Michela Sassi, 67–98. Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore.

Denyer, Nicholas, ed. 2001. *Plato, Alcibiades*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dillon, John. 1969. "Enn. III.5: Plotinus' exegesis of the *Symposion* myth." *Agon* III: 24–44.

Dillon, John. 1980. "The descent of the soul in middle platonic and gnostic theory." In: *The rediscovery of gnosticism. Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978. Volume One. The School of Valentinus*, edited by Bentley Layton, 357–364. Leiden: Brill.

Dillon, John. 1986. "Plotinus and the transcendental imagination." In: *Religious Imagination*, edited by James P. Mackey, 55–64. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Dillon, John M. 1996. "An ethic for the late antique sage." In: *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, edited by Lloyd P. Gerson, 315–335. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dillon, John M. 2003. "Plotino y su tratado *Sobre si los astros influyen* [*Enn.* II 3]." *MHNH. Revista Internacional de Investigación sobre Magia y Astrología Antiguas* 3: 149–158.

Dillon, John. 2005. "Iamblichus' Criticism of Plotinus' doctrine of the Undescended Soul." In: *Studi sull'anima in Plotino*, edited by Riccardo Chiaradonna, 337–351. [Napoli]: Bibliopolis.

Dillon, John. 2008. "The One of the Soul and the 'Flower of the Intellect'. Models of Hyper-intellection in Later Neoplatonism." In: *Platonism and Forms of Intelligence, 2008*, edited by John Dillon, and Jure Zovko, 247–258. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Dillon, John M. 2013. "Shadows on the Soul: Plotinian Approaches to a Solution of the Mind-Body Problem." In: *Plato Revived. Essays on Ancient Platonism in Honour of Dominic O'Meara*, edited by Filip Karfík, and Euree Song, 73–85. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Dillon, John M. 2016. "Plotinus Orator. Literary and Rhetorical Features in the *Enneads*." In: *Philosophus Orator. Rhetorische Strategien und Strukturen in philosophischer Literatur. Michael Erler zum 60. Geburtstag*, edited by Irmgard Männlein-Robert, Wolfgang Rother, Stefan Schorn, and Christian Tornau, 297–312. Basel: Schwabe.

Dillon, John M., and H.J. Blumenthal. 2015. *Plotinus, Ennead IV.3-IV.4.29: problems concerning the soul. Transl. with an introduction and commentary, John M. Dillon and H.J. Blumenthal*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ.

Dodds, Eric Robertson. 1960. "Tradition and Personal Achievement in the Philosophy of Plotinus." *Journal of Roman Studies* 50: 1–7.

Dodds, E.R. 1963. *Proclus. The Elements of Theology. A revised text with translation, intro-*

duction and commentary by E.R. Dodds, 2. ed. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press.

Dodds, Eric Robertson. 1965. *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety. Some aspects of religious experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dörrie, Heinrich. 1970. "Der König. Ein platonisches Schlüsselwort, von Plotin mit neuem Sinn erfüllt." *Revue internationale de philosophie* 24: 217–235.

Dörrie, Heinrich and Matthias Baltes. 2002. *Die Philosophische Lehre des Platonismus. Bd. 6, 1–2. Von der 'Seele' als der Ursache aller sinnvollen Abläufe. Bausteine 169–181: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog.

Dufour, Richard. 2006. "Le rang de l'âme du monde au sein des réalités intelligibles et son rôle cosmologique chez Plotin." In: *Études platoniciennes III. L'âme amphibie. Études sur l'âme selon Plotin*, 89–102. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Eliasson, Erik. 2008. *The notion of That which depends on us in Plotinus and its background*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. 1998. "Plotinus on the Emotions." In: *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, edited by Juha Sihvola, and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 339–363. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. 2012. "Plotinus and Plato on soul and action." In: *Plato and the Divided Self*, edited by Rachel Barney, Tad Brennan, and Charles Brittain, 350–367. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. 2017. *Plotinus*. London and New York: Routledge.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur K., and Steven K. Strange. 2015. *Plotinus, Ennead VI.4 and VI.5: on the presence of being, one and the same, everywhere as a whole. Transl. with an introd. and commentary, Eyjólfur K. Emilsson and Steven K. Strange*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur Kjalar. 1988. *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study*. Cambridge/New York/New Rochelle: Cambridge University Press.

Emilsson, Eyólfur Kjalar. 2007. *Plotinus on Intellect*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Erler, Michael. 2004. "'Sokrates in der Höhle'. Argumente als Affekttherapie im *Gorgias* und im *Phaidon*." In: *Platon verstehen. Themen und Perspektiven*, edited by Marcel van Ackeren, 57–68. Darmstadt: WBG.

Erler, Michael. 2005. "'Argumente, die die Seele erreichen'. Der *Axiochos* und ein antiker Streit über den Zweck philosophischer Argumente." In: *Pseudoplatonica. Akten des Kongresses zu den Pseudoplatonica vom 6.–9. Juli 2003 in Bamberg*, edited by Klaus Döring, Michael Erler, and Stefan Schorn, 81–95. Stuttgart: Steiner.

Ferwerda, Rein. 1965. *La signification des images et des métaphores dans la pensée de Plotin*. Groningen: Wolters.

Flasch, Kurt. 1965. "Vorwort." In: *Parusia. Studien zur Philosophie Platons und zur Problemgeschichte des Platonismus. Festgabe für Johannes Hirschberger*, edited by Kurt Flasch, V–VIII. Frankfurt a. M.: Minerva.

Fleet, Barrie. 2012. *Plotinus, Ennead IV. 8: on the Descent of the Soul into Bodies : Translation with an Introduction and Commentary, Barrie Fleet*. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ.

Fleet, Barrie. 2016. *Plotinus, Ennead IV. 7: On the Immortality of the Soul. Translation with an Introduction and Commentary, Barrie Fleet*. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ.

Fronterotta, Francesco. 2003. "Notice, Notes (Traité 10)." In: *Plotin, Traités 7–21. Présentés, traduits et annotés par Luc Brisson, Jean-Michel Charrue, Richard Dufour, Jean-Marie Flamand, Francesco Fronterotta, Matthieu Guyot, Jérôme Laurent, Laurent Lavaud, Alain Petit et Jean-François Pradeau. Sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 133–152; 172–208. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Gallaher, Shaun, ed. 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of The Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gerson, Lloyd P. 1992. "The Discovery of Self in Antiquity." *The Personalist Forum* 8 (1 [Supplement: Studies in Personalist Philosophy. Proceedings of the Conference on Persons, Spring 1992]): 249–257.

Gerson, Lloyd P. 1994. *Plotinus*. London/New York: Routledge.

Gerson, Lloyd P. 1997. "Introspection, Self-Reflexivity and the Essence of Thinking." In: *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism*, edited by J.J. Cleary, 153–173. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Gerson, Lloyd P. 2014. "Moral responsibility and what is 'up to us' in Plotinus." In: *What is Up to Us? Studies on Agency and Responsibility in Ancient Philosophy*, edited by Pierre Destrée, Ricardo Salles, and Marco Zingano, 251–263. Sankt Augustin: Academia.

Gerson, Lloyd P. 2021. "Plotinus on Immortality and the Problem of Personal Identity." In: *Immortality in ancient philosophy*, edited by Alex Long, 178–195. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gill, Christopher. 2006. *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Griffin, Michael J. 2016. "Introduction." In: *Olympiodorus, On Plato : First Alcibiades 10–28. Translated by Michael J. Griffin*, 1–31. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Gritti, Elena. 2005. "La ΦΑΝΤΑΣΙΑ plotiniana tra illuminazione intellettiva e impassibilità dell'anima." In: *Studi sull'anima in Plotino*, edited by Riccardo Chiaradonna, 251–274. Napoli: Bibliopolis.

Gurtler, Gary M. 1984. "Sympathy in Plotinus." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (4): 395–406.

Gurtler, Gary. 1988. *Plotinus. The Experience of Unity*. New York: Lang.

Gurtler, Gary M. 1997. "Plotinus and the Alienation of the Soul." In: *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism*, edited by John J. Cleary, 221–234. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Gurtler, Gary. 2005. "Plotinus: Self and Consciousness." In: *History of Platonism. Plato*

Redivivus, edited by Robert Berchman, and John F. Finamore, 113–130. New Orleans: University Press of the South.

Gurtler, Gary M. 2008. "Plotinus on the Soul's Omnipresence in Body." *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 2: 113–127.

Gurtler, Gary M. 2010. "Review of Pauliina Remes, Plotinus on Self: The Philosophy of the 'We'." *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 4: 82–85.

Gurtler, Gary M. 2015. *Plotinus, Ennead IV.4.30–45&IV.5. Transl. with an introduction and commentary, Gary M. Gurtler*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ.

Gurtler, Gary M. 2022. *From the Alien to the Alone: A Study of Soul in Plotinus*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.

Guyot, Matthieu. 2003. "Notice, Notes (Traité 15)." In: *Plotin, Traités 7–21. Présentés, traduits et annotés par Luc Brisson, Jean-Michel Charrue, Richard Dufour, Jean-Marie Flamand, Francesco Fronterotta, Matthieu Guyot, Jérôme Laurent, Laurent Lavaud, Alain Petit et Jean-François Pradeau. Sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 329–339; 350–363. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Hadot, Pierre. 1980. "Les niveaux de conscience dans les états mystiques selon Plotin." *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* LXXVII: 243–266.

Hadot, Pierre. 1986. "Neoplatonist Spirituality I. Plotinus and Porphyry." In: *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality. Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, edited by A.H. Armstrong, 230–249. New York: Crossroad.

Hadot, Pierre. 1987. "L'union de l'âme avec l'intellect divin dans l'expérience mystique plotinienne." In: *Proclus et son influence. Actes du Colloque de Neuchâtel*, edited by G. Boss, and G. Seel, 3–27. Neuchâtel: Éditions du Grand Midi.

Hadot, Pierre. 1988. *Plotin, Traité 38. VI 7. Introduction, traduction, commentaire et notes par Pierre Hadot*. Paris: Cerf.

Hadot, Pierre. 1994. *Plotin, Traité 9. VI 9. Introduction, traduction, commentaire et notes par Pierre Hadot*. Paris: Cerf.

Hadot, Pierre. 1997. *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard*. Paris: folio.

Hadot, Pierre. 2002. *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique. Préface d'Arnold I. Davidson. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée*. Paris: Albin Michel.

Halfwassen, Jens. 2010. "Die Seele und ihr Verhältnis zum Geist bei Plotin." In: *Über die Seele*, edited by Katja Crone, Robert Schnepf, and Jürgen Stolzenberg, 56–76. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Ham, Bertrand. 2000. *Plotin, Traité 49, V, 3. Introduction, traduction, commentaire et notes par Bertrand Ham* (*Les écrits de Plotin*). Paris: Cerf.

Harder, Richard, Rudolf Beutler, and Willy Theiler. 1956–1971. *Plotins Schriften. Neubearbeitung mit griechischem Lesetext und Anmerkungen, übersetzt von Richard Harder. Fortgeführt von Rudolf Beutler und Willy Theiler, VI Bände*. Hamburg: Meiner.

Helleman-Elgersma, Wypkje. 1980. *Soul-sisters. A Commentary on Enneads IV 3* (*27*), *1–8 of Plotinus*. Amsterdam:

Henry, Paul. 1937. "Vers la reconstitution de l'enseignement oral de Plotin." *Bulletin Association G. Budé* 60: 310–342.

Henry, Paul. 1938. *Études plotininnes. 1. Les états du texte de Plotin*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.

Himmerich, Wilhelm. 1959. *Eudaimonia. Die Lehre des Plotin von der Selbstverwirklichung des Menschen*. Würzburg: Konrad Triltsch Verlag.

Himmerich, Wilhelm. 1965. "Platonische Tradition in didaktischer Reflexion: Plotin-Comenius-Scheler." In: *Parusia: Studien zur Philosophie Platons und zur Problemgeschichte des Platonismus: Festgabe für Johannes Hirschberger*, 487–507. Frankfurt a. M.: Minerva.

Hoffmann, Philippe. 1997. "L'expression de l'indicible dans le néoplatonisme grec de Plotin à Damascius." In: *Dire l'évidence* (*Philosophie et rhétorique antiques*), edited by Carlos Lévy, and Laurent Pernot, 335–390. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Horn, Christoph. 1995. *Plotin über Sein, Zahl und Einheit. Eine Studie zu den systematischen Grundlagen der Enneaden*. Stuttgart/Leipzig: Teubner.

Horn, Christoph. 2000. "Selbstbezüglichkeit des Geistes bei Plotin und Augustinus." In: *Gott und sein Bild. Augustins De Trinitate im Spiegel gegenwärtiger Forschung*, edited by Johannes Brachtendorf, 81–103. Paderborn: Schöningh.

Horn, Christoph. 2003. "Plotins Philosophie des Geistes. Ideenwissen, Selbstbewusstsein, Subjektivität." In: *Seele, Denken, Bewusstsein. Zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Geistes*, edited by Uwe Meixner, and Albert Newen, 57–89. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

Horn, Christoph. 2007. "The Concept of Will in Plotinus." In: *Reading Ancient Texts. Volume II: Aristotle and Neoplatonism. Essays in Honour of Denis O'Brien*, edited by Suzanne Stern-Gillet, and Kevin Corrigan, 153–178. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Horn, Christoph. 2010. "Nachwort." In: *Platon, Von der Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (*Phaidon*). *Aus dem Griechischen von Otto Apelt. Mit einem Nachwort von Christoph Horn*, 139–148. München: C.H. Beck.

Hutchinson, D.M. 2011. "Apprehension of Thought in *Ennead* 4.3.30." *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 5: 262–282.

Hutchinson, D.M. 2018. *Plotinus on Consciousness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Igal, Jesús. 1979. "Aristóteles y la evolución de la antropología de Plotino." *Pensamiento* 35 (138): 315–346.

Inwood, Brad. 1986. "Goal and Target in Stoicism." *Journal of Philosophy* 83: 547–556.

Inwood, Brad. 2005. *Reading Seneca. Stoic Philosophy at Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Jonas, Hans. 1971. "The soul in Gnosticism and Plotinus." In: *Le néoplatonisme. Royaumont. 9–13 juin 1969*, 45–53. Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique.

Kalligas, Paul. 1988. "Some New Plotinian Emendations." *Emerita* 56 (1): 95–102.

Kalligas, Paul. 1997. "Forms of Individuals in Plotinus: A Re-Examination." *Phronesis* 42 (2): 206–227.

Kalligas, Paul. 2000. "Living Body, Soul, and Virtue in the Philosophy of Plotinus." *Dionysius* XVIII (December): 25–38.

Kalligas, Paul. 2012. *"Eiskrisis*, or the Presence of Soul in the Body. A Plotinian Conundrum." *Ancient Philosophy* 32: 147–166.

Kalligas, Paul. 2014. *The Enneads of Plotinus: a Commentary. Vol. 1. Transl. by Elizabeth Key Fowden*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Karamanolis, George E. 2006. *Plato and Aristotle in agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Karfík, Filip. 2014. "Parts of the Soul in Plotinus." In: *Partitioning the soul : debates from Plato to Leibniz*, edited by Klaus Corcilius, and Dominik Perler, 107–148. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter.

Katz, Joseph. 1954. "Plotinus and the Gnostics." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15 (2): 289–198.

King, R.A.H. 2009. *Aristotle and Plotinus on Memory*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Kobusch, Theo. 1993. *Die Entdeckung der Person. Metaphysik der Freiheit und modernes Menschenbild*. Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder.

Kobusch, Theo. 2002. "Negative Theologie als praktische Metaphysik." In: *Théologie négative* (*Biblioteca dell'Archivio di Filosofia*), edited by Marco Olivetti, 185–200. Padova: CEDAM.

Lang, Wolfram. 1926. *Das Traumbuch des Synesius von Kyrene. Uebersetzung und Analyse der philosophischen Grundlagen*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

Laurent, Jérôme. 1999a. *L'Homme et le monde selon Plotin*. Paris: ENS Éditions.

Laurent, Jérôme. 1999b. "La réincarnation chez Plotin et avant Plotin." In: *L'Homme et le monde selon Plotin*, 115–137. Paris: ENS Éditions.

Laurent, Jérôme. 2006. "L'autarcie joyeuse du sage selon Plotin." In: *Études platoniciennes III. L'âme amphibie. Études sur l'âme selon Plotin*, 131–139. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Lavaud, Laurent. 2002. "Notice, Notes (Traité 6)." In: *Plotin, Traités 1–6. Traductions sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 229–269. Paris: Flammarion.

Lavaud, Laurent. 2007. "Notice, Notes (Traité 39)." In: *Plotin, Traités 38–41. Présentés, traduits et annotés par Richard Dufour, Francesco Fronterotta, Laurent Lavaud et Pierre-Marie Morel Sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 173–202; 242–326. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Leroux, Georges. 1990. *Plotin. Traité sur la liberté et la volonté de l'Un* [*Ennéade VI, 8* (*39*)]. *Introduction, texte grec, traduction et commentaire par Georges Leroux*. Paris: Vrin.

Lloyd, A.C. 1964. "Nosce teipsum and conscientia." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 46: 188–200.

Long, Anthony. 2015. *Greek models of mind and self*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Mamo, Plato. 1976. "Is Plotinian Mysticism Monistic?" In: *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, edited by R. Baine Harris, 199–215. Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies.

Markschies, Christoph. 1994. "Die platonische Metapher vom 'inneren Menschen': eine Brücke zwischen antiker Philosophie und altchristlicher Theologie." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 105 (Vierte Folge XLII): 1–17.

Markschies, Christoph. 1995. "Die Platonische Metapher vom 'inneren Menschen': Eine Brücke zwischen antiker Philosophie und altchristliche Theologie." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1 (3): 3–18.

Markschies, Christoph. 1998. "Innerer Mensch." *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* XVIII: 266–312.

Marzolo, Carlo. 2006. *Plotino, Che cos'è l'essere vivente e che cos'è l'uomo? I 1* [*53*]. *Introduzione, testo greco, traduzione e commento di Carlo Marzolo. Prefazione di Cristina d'Ancona*. Pisa: Edizioni Plus. Pisa University Press.

Mazilu, Daniel. 2008. *Raison et mystique dans le néoplatonisme*. Bucharest: Zeta Books.

Meijer, Pieter A. 1992. *Plotinus on the good or the one* (*Enneads VI,9*)*: an analytical commentary*. Amsterdam: Gieben.

Morel, Pierre-Marie. 1999. "Individualité et identité de l'âme humaine chez Plotin." *Les cahiers philosophiques de Strasbourg* 8: 53–66.

Morel, Pierre-Marie. 2002. "La sensation, messagère de l'âme. Plotin, v, 3 [49], 3." In: *La connaissance de soi. Études sur le traité 49 de Plotin*, edited by Monique Dixsaut, 209–227. Paris: Vrin.

Mortley, Raoul. 2013. *Plotinus, Self and the World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moutsopoulos, E. 2000. *Le problème de l'imaginaire chez Plotin. Deuxième édition*. Paris: Vrin.

Müller, C.W. 1965. *Gleiches zu Gleichem. Ein Prinzip frühgriechischen Denkens*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Narbonne, Jean-Marc. 2011. *Plotinus in Dialogue with the Gnostics*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Narbonne, Jean-Marc. 2012. "Introduction." In: *Plotin, Œuvres complètes. Tome 1, Volume 1. Introduction par Jean-Marc Narbonne. Traité 1* [*1 6*]*, Sur le beau. Texte établi par L. Ferroni. Introduit, traduit et annoté par M. Achard et J.-M. Narbonne*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Nauck, A. 1964. *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta* (*Leipzig: Teubner, 1889*). Hildesheim: Olms.

Nickl, Peter, and Georgios Terizakis, ed. 2010. *Die Seele: Metapher oder Wirklichkeit? Philosophische Ergründungen*. Bielefeld: transcript.

Nikulin, Dimitri. 2014. "Memory and Recollection in Plotinus." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 96 (2): 183–201.

Nikulin, D.V. 2019. *Neoplatonism in late antiquity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Noble, Christopher Isaac. 2013. "How Plotinus' Soul Animates his Body: The Argument for the Soul-Trace at *Ennead* 4.4.18.1–9." *Phronesis* 58: 249–279.

Noble, Christopher Isaac. 2022. "Plotinus on Providence and Fate." In: *The new Cambridge companion to Plotinus*, edited by Lloyd P. Gerson, and James Wilberding, 386–409. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Brien, Denis. 1971. "Plotinus on evil: a study of matter and the soul in Plotinus' conception of human evil." In: *Le Néoplatonisme. Actes du colloque international sur le néoplatonisme, Royaumont*, edited by Pierre Hadot, and Pierre Maxime Schuhl, 113–146. Paris: Éditions du CNRS.

O'Brien, Denis. 1977. "Le volontaire et la nécessité: réflexions sur la descente de l'âme dans la philosophie de Plotin." *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* 167: 401–422.

O'Brien, Denis. 1981. "Plotinus and the Gnostics on the generation of matter." In: *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought. Essays in Honour of A.H. Armstrong*, edited by H.J. Blumenthal, and R.A. Markus, 108–123. London: Variorum Publications.

O'Brien, Denis. 1990. "The origin of matter and the origin of evil in Plotinus' criticism of the Gnostics." In: *Herméneutique et ontologie. Mélanges en hommage à Pierre Aubenque*, edited by Rémi Braque, and Jean-Francois Courtine, 181–202. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

O'Brien, Denis. 1993. *Théodicée plotinienne, théodicée gnostique*. Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill.

O'Brien, Denis. 1999. "La matière chez Plotin: son origine, sa nature." *Phronesis* 44 (1): 45–71.

O'Daly, Gerard. 2017. *Plotinus, Ennead 1.1: What is the living thing? What is man? Translated with an introduction and commentary, Gerard O'Daly*. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ.

O'Daly, Gerard J.P. 1973. *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self*. Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press.

O'Meara, Dominic. 1974. "À propos d'un témoignage sur l'expérience mystique de Plotin ("Enn." IV 8 [6], 1, 1–11)." *Mnemosyne* 27 (3): 238–244.

O'Meara, Dominic. 1990. "Le problème du discours sur l'indicible chez Plotin." *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 122: 145–156.

O'Meara, Dominic. 1993. *Plotinus. An Introduction to the Enneads*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

O'Meara, Dominic J. 2010. "L'expérience de l'union de l'âme avec l'Intellect chez Plotin." In: *L'Essere del Pensiero. Saggi sulla filosofia di Plotino*, edited by Daniela P. Taormina, 47–61. Napoli: Bibliopolis.

Opsomer, Jan. 2010. "Olympiodorus." In: *The Cambridge history of philosophy in Late Antiquity 2* edited by Lloyd P. Gerson, 696–710. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ousager, Asger. 2004. *Plotinus on Selfhood, Freedom and Politics*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Pépin, Jean. 1971. "Héraclès et son reflet dans le néoplatonisme." In: *Le néoplatonisme. Royaumont. 9–13 juin 1969*, 167–192. Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique.

Perl, Eric D. 2015. *Plotinus, Ennead v.1. On the Three Primary Levels of Reality. Transl. with an introduction and commentary, Eric D. Perl*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publ.

Peterson, Erik. 1933. "Herkunft und Bedeutung der *Monos pros Monon*-Formel bei Plotin." *Philologus* 88: 30–41.

Plass, Paul. 1982. "Plotinus' Ethical Theory." *Illinois Classical Studies* 7 (2): 241–259.

Pradeau, Jean-François. 2010. "Notice, Notes (Traité 53)." In: *Plotin, Traités 51–54. Porphyre, Vie de Plotin. Traductions sous la direction de Luc Brisson et Jean-François Pradeau*, 171–183; 201–236. Paris: GF Flammarion.

Puech, Henri-Charles. 1960. "Plotin et les gnostiques." In: *Les Sources de Plotin* (*Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique tome v*), 161–190. Genève: Fondation Hardt.

Rappe, Sara. 1996. "Self-knowledge and subjectivity in the *Enneads*." In: *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, edited by Lloyd P. Gerson, 250–274. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rappe, Sara. 2000. *Reading Neoplatonism. Non-discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius*. Cambridge:

Remes, Pauliina. 2006. "Plotinus's Ethics of Disinterested Interest." *Journal of the history of Philosophy* 44 (1 [January]): 1–23.

Remes, Pauliina. 2007. *Plotinus on Self. The Philosophy of the 'We'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Remes, Pauliina. 2008a. "Inwardness and Infinity of Selfhood: From Plotinus to Augustine." In: *Ancient Philosophy of the Self*, edited by Pauliina Remes, and Juha Sihvola, 155–176. Dordrecht/London: Springer.

Remes, Pauliina. 2008b. *Neoplatonism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Remes, Pauliina. 2022. "Self-Knowledge and Self-Reflexivity." In: *The New Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, edited by Lloyd P. Gerson, and James Wilberding, 241–264. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Remes, Pauliina, and Juha Sihvola, ed. 2008. *Ancient Philosophy of the Self*. Dordrecht/London: Springer.

Reydams-Schils, Gretchen. 2005. *The Roman Stoics: self, responsibility, and affection*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Reydams-Schils, Gretchen. 2011. "Authority and Agency in Stoicism." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 51: 296–322.

Rich, Audrey N.M. 1957. "Reincarnation in Plotinus." *Mnemosyne* 10 (3): 232–238.

Richter, Arthur. 1897. *Die Psychologie des Plotin*. Halle: H.W. Schmidt.

Rist, John M. 1961. "Plotinus on Matter and Evil." *Phronesis* 6 (2): 154–166.

Rist, John M. 1963. "Forms of Individuals in Plotinus." *The Classical Quarterly* 13 (2): 223–231.

Rist, John M. 1967a. "Integration and the Undescended Soul in Plotinus." *The American Journal of Philology* 88 (4): 410–422.

Rist, John M. 1967b. *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rist, J.M. 1973. "The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle." *The Review of Metaphysics* 27 (1): 75–87.

Rist, John M. 1989. "Back to Mysticism of Plotinus: Some more Specifics." *Journal of the history of Philosophy* 27 (2): 183–197.

Rizzerio, Laura. 2003. "Plotin et la notion d'imagination." In: *De la phantasia à l'imagination*, edited by Danielle Lories, and Laura Rizzerio, 79–102. Louvain/Namur/Paris: Éditions Peeters.

Schibli, H.S. 1989. "Apprehending Our Happiness: *Antilepsis* and the Middle Soul in Plotinus, *Ennead* I 4.10." *Phronesis* XXXIV (2): 205–219.

Schniewind, Alexandrine. 2000. "Quelles conditions pour une éthique plotinienne? Prescription et description dans les *Ennéades*." In: *Études sur Plotin*, edited by Michel Fattal, 47–73. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Schniewind, Alexandrine. 2003. *L'éthique du sage chez Plotin. Le paradigme du spoudaios*. Paris: Vrin.

Schniewind, Alexandrine. 2005. "Les âmes amphibies et les causes de leurs différences. À propos de Plotin, Enn. IV 8 [6], 4.31–5." In: *Studi sull'anima in Plotino*, edited by Riccardo Chiaradonna, 179–200. Napoli: Bibliopolis.

Schniewind, Alexandrine. 2007. *Plotin, Traité 5. v,9. Introduction, traduction, commentaires et notes par Alexandrine Schniewind*. Paris: Cerf.

Schroeder, Frederic M. 1986a. "Conversion and Consciousness in Plotinus, 'Enneads' 5, 1 [10], 7." *Hermes* 114 (2): 186–195.

Schroeder, Frederic M. 1986b. "The Self in Ancient Religious Experience." In: *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality. Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, edited by A.H. Armstrong, 337–359. New York: Crossroad.

Schroeder, Frederic M. 1987. "Synousia, Synaisthesis and Synesis: Presence and Dependence in the Plotinian Philosophy of Consciousness." In: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Teil II: Principat. Band 36/1. Herausgegeben von W. Haase*, 677–699. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Schroeder, Frederic M. 2012. "*Avocatio*, Rhetoric, and the Technique of Contemplation in Plotinus." *Dionysius* XXX (Dec.): 147–160.

Schuhl, Pierre Maxime. 1973. "Descente métaphysique et ascension de l'âme dans la

philosophie de Plotin." *Studi internazionali di filosofia editi da Augusto Guzzo e Giorgio Tonelli* v: 71–84.

Schuhl, Pierre Maxime. 1976. "La descente de l'âme selon Plotin." *Diotima Athenai* 4: 65–68.

Schwyzer, H.-R. 1951. "Plotinos." *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 41: 471–592.

Schwyzer, H.-R. 1960. "'Bewusst' und 'unbewusst' bei Plotin." In: *Les Sources de Plotin* (*Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique tome v*), 341–390. Genève: Fondation Hardt.

Shields, Christopher. 2014. "Plato's Divided Soul." In: *Partitioning the soul : debates from Plato to Leibniz*, edited by Klaus Corcilius, and Dominik Perler, 15–38. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter.

Sihvola, Juha. 2008. "Aristotle on the Individuality of Self." In: *Ancient Philosophy of the Self*, edited by Pauliina Remes, and Juha Sihvola, 125–137. Dordrecht/London: Springer.

Smith, Andrew. 1978. "Unconsciousness and Quasiconsciousness in Plotinus." *Phronesis* 23 (3): 292–301.

Smith, Andrew. 1999. "The significance of practical ethics for Plotinus." In: *Traditions of Platonism. Essays in Honour of J. Dillon*, edited by J.J. Cleary, 227–236. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Sorabji, Richard. 2000. "Is the True Self an Individual in the Platonist Tradition?" In: *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation. Actes du colloque international de l'Institut des tradition textuelles* (*Paris et Villejuif, 22–25 septembre 1999*), edited by Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, 293–299. Paris: Vrin.

Sorabji, Richard. 2006. *Self. Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sorabji, Richard. 2008. "Graeco-Roman Varieties of Self." In: *Ancient Philosophy of the Self*, edited by Pauliina Remes, and Juha Sihvola, 13–34. Dordrecht/London: Springer.

Stamatellos, Giannis. 2013. "Plotinus on Transmigration: a Reconsideration." *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* 7 (1): 49–64.

Stamatellos, Giannis. 2015. "Virtue and Hexis in Plotinus." *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 9: 129–145.

Stang, Charles M. 2016. *Our Divine Double*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Stang, Charles M. 2019. "The Doubled Self and the Worship of the Gods." In: *Self, self-fashioning and individuality in Late Antiquity : new perspectives*, edited by Maren Niehoff, and Joshua Levinson, 149–168. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Steel, Carlos. 1978. *The changing self: a study on the soul in later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*. Bruxelles:

Stern-Gillet, Suzanne. 2006. "Consciousness and Introspection in Plotinus and Augustine." *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* XXII: 145–174.

Stern-Gillet, Suzanne. 2008. "Dual Selfhood and Self-Perfection in the *Enneads*." *Epoché* 13 (2): 331–345.

Stern-Gillet, Suzanne. 2017. "Plotinus and the Problem of Consciousness." In: *Consciousness and the Great Philosophers: What would they have said about our mind-body problem?*, edited by Stephen Leach, and James Tartaglia, 19–27. New York: Routledge.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2013. "Argument und Bild in Plotins Schrift *Über das Schöne*." In: *Argument und literarische Form in der antiken Philosophie*, edited by Michael Erler, and Jan E. Hessler, 495–516. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2014. "Plotins *phantasia*. Zur Theorie der Imagination." In: *Imagination und Transformation. Zur Entstehung des Neuen*, edited by Philipp Brüllmann, Ursula Rombach, and Cornelia Wilde, 75–96. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2016a. "Erscheinung. Zu Plotins Theorie des Seelenabstiegs." In: *Zur-Erscheinung-Kommen. Bildlichkeit als theoretischer Prozess* (*Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, Sonderheft*), edited by Anne Eusterschulte, and Wiebke-Marie Stock, 51–64. Hamburg: Meiner.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2016b. "Seelenspur und Körperlicht. Überlegungen zu Plotins Theorie des Seelenschattens in der Schrift VI 4 [22]." In: *Platon und die Bilder. Antike-Studien Band 3*, edited by Dietmar Koch, Irmgard Männlein-Robert, and Niels Weidtmann, 129–148. Tübingen: Attempto.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2019. "Die innere Stadt und die Stadt der Welt. Das Politische bei Plotin." In: *Philosophie für die Polis*, edited by Christoph Riedweg, 411–438. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2020. *Plotinus, Ennead III.4: On our allotted guardian spirit. Translated with an introduction and commentary, Wiebke-Marie Stock*. Las Vegas/Zurich/Athens: Parmenides Publ.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2024a (forthcoming). "Turn the Mirror of Your Soul. Plotinus on How to Affect Memory." *Mnemosyne* 77: 1–22.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2024b (forthcoming). "Unio mystica." *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*: 33 (258).

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2024c. "Selbst." In: *Plotin-Handbuch. Leben - Werk - Wirkung*, edited by Christian Tornau, 361–368. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.

Stock, Wiebke-Marie. 2024d. "Liebe (Eros)." In: *Plotin-Handbuch. Leben - Werk - Wirkung*, edited by Christian Tornau, 297–304. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.

Sweeney, Leo, S.J. 1992. "Mani's Twin and Plotinus: Questions on 'Self'." In: *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, edited by Richard T. Wallis, 381–424. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Szlezák, Thomas Alexander. 1979. *Platon und Aristoteles in der Nuslehre Plotins*. Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe.

Szlezák, Thomas Alexander. 2000. "L'interprétation plotinienne de la théorie platonicienne de l'âme." In: *Études sur Plotin*, edited by Michel Fattal, 173–191. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Taormina, Daniela P. 2010. "Plotino e Porfirio sul messagero e il re. Nota sulla conoscenza di sé secondo Plotino, Trattato *49*, 3.44–4.1." In: *L'Essere del Pensiero. Saggi sulla filosofia di Plotino*, edited by Daniela P. Taormina, 245–266. Napoli: Bibliopolis.

Taormina, Daniela P. 2011. "Dalla potenzialità all'attualità. Un'introduzione al problema della memoria in Plotino." In: *Plato, Aristotle, or Both? Dialogues between Platonism and Aristotelianism in Antiquity*, edited by Thomas Bénatouïl, Emanuele Maffi, and Franco Trabattoni, 139–159. Hildesheim/Zürich/New York: Georg Olms Verlag.

Taormina, Daniela P. 2020. "Il corpo, la luce e l'insieme dei due. Una proposta esegetica di Plotino, *enn.* I 1 [53], 6, 14–7, 6." In: *Körperlichkeit in der Philosophie der Spätantike. Corporeità nella filosofia tardoantica*, edited by Christoph Horn, Daniela P. Taormina, and Denis Walter, 17–42. Baden-Baden: Academia.

Tardieu, Michel. 1992. "Les gnostiques dans la *Vie de Plotin*. Analyse du chapitre 16." In: *Porphyre. La vie de Plotin. II. Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire, notes complémentaires, bibliographie*, 503–546. Paris: Vrin.

Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Thesleff, Holger. 1980. "Notes on Unio Mystica in Plotinus." *Arctos. Acta Philologica Fennica* 14: 101–114.

Tornau, Christian. 1998. *Plotin. Enneaden VI 4–5* [*22–23*]. *Ein Kommentar*. Stuttgart/Leipzig: Teubner.

Tornau, Christian. 2001. *Plotin, Ausgewählte Schriften. Herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Christian Tornau*. Stuttgart: Reclam.

Tornau, Christian. 2009. "Qu'est-ce qu'un individu? Unité, individualité et conscience de soi dans la métaphysique plotinienne de l'âme." *Études philosophiques: Plotin et son Platonisme* 3: 333–360.

Tornau, Christian. 2010. "Was ist ein Individuum? Einheit, Individualität und Selbstbewußtsein in Plotins Metaphysik der Seele." *Tabula rasa. Zeitschrift für Gesellschaft und Kultur* 51 (5) https://www.tabularasamagazin.de/was-ist-ein-individuum-einheit-individualitaet-und-selbstbewusstsein-in-plotins-metaphysik-der-seele1/

Tornau, Christian. 2016. "Seelenspur und Aufnahmefähigkeit: ein plotinischer Zirkel?" In: *Seele und Materie im Neuplatonismus / Soul and Matter in Neoplatonism*, edited by Jens Halfwassen, T. Dangel, and C. O'Brien, 135–159. Heidelberg: Winter.

Trouillard, Jean. 1961. "Valeur critique de la mystique plotinienne." *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 59: 431–444.

Trouillard, Jean. 1974. "Raison et mystique chez Plotin." *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 20 (1–2): 3–14.

Trouillard, Jean. 2011. *La purification plotinienne. Préface de Jean-Michel Le Lannou*. Paris: Hermann.

Trouillard, Jean. 2014. *Raison et mystique. Études néoplatoniciennes. Préface de Jean-Marc Narbonne*. Paris: Les éditions du Cerf.

van den Berg, Robbert M. 2014. "Proclus and Iamblichus on Moral Education." *Phronesis* 59 (3): 272–296.

Vassilopoulou, Panayiota. 2021. "The Gaze in the Mirror: Human Self and the Myth of Dionysus in Plotinus." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 103 (4): 634–669.

Vorwerk, Matthias. 2001. *Plotins Schrift 'Über den Geist, die Ideen und das Seiende'. Enneade V 9 [5]. Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar von Matthias Vorwerk*. München/Leipzig: Saur.

Warren, Edward W. 1964. "Consciousness in Plotinus." *Phronesis* 9 (2): 83–97.

Warren, Edward W. 1965. "Memory in Plotinus." *The Classical Quarterly* 15 (2): 252–262.

Warren, Edward W. 1966. "Imagination in Plotinus." *The Classical Quarterly* N.S. XVI: 277–285.

Wilberding, James. 2006. *Plotinus' Cosmology. A Study of Ennead II.1 (40). Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wolfe, Kenneth. 2010. "The status of the individual in Plotinus." In: *Ancient Models of Mind. Studies in Human and Divine Rationality*, edited by David Sedley, and Andrea Nightingale, 216–224. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Index of Ancient Sources

Alexander of Aphrodisias
De an.
pass. 22*n*12
14, 4 127*n*14
15, 9–29 127*n*14
16, 10 5*n*24
20, 28–21, 10 127*n*14
21, 4 f. 5*n*24
24, 1–3 5*n*24
89, 11–12 74*n*37
De fato
169, 6–12 51*n*64
169, 12–15 51*n*65
180, 4–6 51*n*66
183, 26–29 50*n*57
183, 29–184, 1 50*n*59
185, 13–14 51*n*66
204, 12–15 48*n*44

Aristotle
De an. 22, 75, 128
I, 4, 408b11–15 128*n*21
II, 1, 412a6–22 22*n*12
II, 1, 412a27–28 5*n*24
II, 1, 412b10–15 127*n*18
II, 1, 413a8–9 127*n*14
II, 2, 413b12–13 4*n*6
II, 3, 414a31 f. 4*n*6
II, 3, 414b19 4*n*6
II, 4, 415a17 4*n*16
III, 5, 430a17–18 74*n*37
III, 7, 431a16–17 63*n*129
De mem.
449b31–450a1 63*n*129
450a12–18 97*n*89
453a6–9 97*n*89
EN
III.1, 1109b35–1110a1 50*n*55
III.1 1111a22–24 50*n*55
III.2 1111b4–10 50*n*56
III, 2, 1111b19–30 49*n*52
III.5 1113b2–1114b25 51*n*67
VIII.11 1161a35–36 22*n*6
X.7 1177b34 74*n*35
X.7 1178a2 74*n*35

Magna moralia:
11.8.5.2–5 51*n*62

Epictetus
Ench.
1. 1,1–2,1 50*n*50

Euripides
fr. 1018 110*n*18

Heraclitus
DK B96 86*n*31

Homer
Il.
1, 3–5 17*n*3
Od.
11, 601–604 97*n*91

Olympiodorus
In Alc.
123–151 Lectures 24–28 19*n*16

Plato
Alc. I 1, 18–19, 23*n*14, 90, 131, 139, 144, 147–148
128e3 131*n*35
128e11 18*n*10, 131*n*35
129a9 131*n*35
129b1 19*n*15
129c–130c 22*n*6
129e9 18*n*11
130a9 18*n*12
130c1–3 18*n*13
130d4 19*n*15
Phd. 1, 17, 24, 40, 64, 91–93, 107, 110, 126*n*11, 141
64e–65a 141*n*83
66d–67d 141*n*83
67c–d 126*n*11
77e 64*n*136
115c 17*n*2

Phdr. 1, 17–18, 83*n*10, 86
245e7–246e1 86*n*28
246ab 17*n*5
Phil.
28c 75*n*42
30a 31*n*46
64c 121*n*22
Prot.
345d–e 51*n*68
Rep. 1, 17–18, 40, 83*n*10, 88, 92–93, 106, 133–134, 141
437b–e 40*n*12
589a–b 88*n*36
588b10 134*n*42
588b–e 23*n*15
588c–e 17*n*4, 134*n*42
588c–589a 142*n*82
588c–589b 88*n*37
617e1–2 92*n*58
617e3 115*n*49
Symp. 92
Theat. 115
176ab 72*n*22
176a8–b1 115*n*51
198d7 137*n*63
200c2 137*n*63
Tim. 1, 17–18, 79–81, 88, 93, 111, 114, 127, 142
30b 31*n*46
34b3–4 88*n*39
36e 127*n*13
36e2–4 88*n*39
69c 111*n*28
69c5–d3 114*n*44
90a 17*n*6
90a2–5 88*n*40
90a2–7 93*n*63
90a5 88*n*39

Plotinus
I 1 [53]
I 1 [53] 13, 16, 20, 112*n*35, 120, 125, 127*n*17, 134, 141, 144, 149*n*6
1 125*n*3
1, 2 125*n*5
1, 2–5 125*n*6
1, 9–11 125*n*4, 144*n*91
2, 1–5 126*n*7
2, 5–30 126*n*8
3–5 22*n*13
3, 1–3 126*n*9
3, 3–8 22*n*7
3, 3–16 126*n*10
3, 17–23 126*n*12
3, 23–26 127*n*15
4, 18–27 128*n*20
5, 1–2 128*n*22
6, 10–16 129*n*23
7, 1–6 129*n*24–25
7, 6 130*n*31
7, 6–9 131*n*37
7, 9–14 132*n*38
7, 14–18 132*n*39
7, 18–21 133*n*41
7, 21–24 133*n*43
8, 1 133*n*44
8, 3 133*n*45
8, 3–6 133*n*46
8, 8–9 134*n*49
8, 9–10 134*n*50
8, 10–15 134*n*51
8, 15–18 135*n*53
9, 1–4 135*n*55
9, 4–6 135*n*56
9, 6–12 136*n*59
9, 12–15 137*n*62
9, 15–18 137*n*65
9, 18–23 137*n*66
9, 23–26 138*n*68
10, 1–3 139*n*75
10, 3–7 140*n*77
10, 5 147*n*1
10, 7–10 141*n*81
11, 1–4 142*n*84
11, 4–8 142*n*86
11, 10–11 143*n*88
11, 11–13 143*n*89
11, 13–15 143*n*87
13, 1–3 144*n*93
13, 5–8 134*n*48, 145*n*95
I 3 [20]
I 3 [20] 120–121
1, 1–5 122*n*28
1, 9–10 122*n*29
1, 19–2, 13 122*n*30
3, 1–10 122*n*31

I 4 [46]
I 4 [46] 57
1, 4–15 57*n*100
1, 15–21 57*n*100
1, 21–30 57*n*100
3, 1 117*n*4
3, 17 117*n*4
3, 32 117*n*4
4, 6–8 58*n*101
4, 8–17 58*n*102
4, 25–28 58*n*103
4, 35–36 58*n*104
5, 2 60, 114
5, 9–11 58*n*105
7 59*n*108
8, 1–5 59*n*106
8, 9–12 59*n*107
8, 12–18 59*n*109
8, 18–27 60*n*112
8, 19 59*n*110
9, 1–4 60*n*115
9, 8 117*n*4
9, 10–11 60*n*117
9, 13–14 61*n*118
9, 14–17 61*n*119
9, 18–25 61*n*120
9, 25–27 61*n*122
9, 28–30 61*n*123
10, 5–6 61*n*121
10, 6–10 62*n*125
10, 10–16 62*n*127
10, 17–21 63*n*128
10, 21–24 63*n*130
10, 24–31 63*n*131
11, 6 117*n*4
14, 1–4 63*n*133
15, 9–11 63*n*124
15, 10 117*n*2
15, 18–21 64*n*135
16, 4–5 64*n*137
16, 17–29 64*n*138
I 6 [1]
I 6 [1] 13, 87, 87*n*33, 120, 122–123
8, 17–18 120*n*17
8, 21 120*n*18
9, 29–34 123*n*38
I 7 [54]
1, 24 89*n*43
I 8 [51]
2, 10 117*n*4
II 1 [40]
II 1 [40] 110
1, 16 117*n*4
3, 1–9 111*n*25
3, 9–12 111*n*26
3, 23–25 111*n*27
5, 1–5 111*n*28
5, 5–8 111*n*29
5, 8–17 111*n*30
5, 18–23 112*n*31
7, 23 117*n*2
7, 30 117*n*2
7, 33 117*n*2
II 3 [52]
II 3 [52] 113
1, 1–2 113*n*37
2, 1–2 113*n*38
2, 2–5 113*n*39
2, 5–16 113*n*40
2, 16–21 113*n*41
3, 21–28 113*n*42
4, 8–9 113*n*42
5, 1–4 113*n*42
5, 11–15 113*n*42
5, 18–19 113*n*42
8, 9–12 114*n*43
9, 6–14 114*n*45
9, 14–19 114*n*47
9, 19–24 115*n*50
9, 24–30 115*n*52
9, 30–34 116*n*53
12, 12–18 113*n*42
II 4 [12]
4, 1 117*n*4
II 6 [17]
1, 43 117*n*3
1, 47 117*n*3
II 7 [37]
1, 43 117*n*2
2, 4 117*n*2
III 1 [3]
III 1 [3] 38, 47, 138
2, 3–4 38*n*2
2, 9–13 38*n*4
2, 13–14 38*n*5
2, 14–17 38*n*7
2, 17–25 39*n*8

III 1 [3] (*cont.*)
3, 19–20 39*n*10
3, 23–24 40*n*11
3, 25–27 40*n*13
3, 27–29 40*n*14
4, 12–20 41*n*16
4, 20–24 41*n*18
4, 24–28 41*n*19, 138*n*71
5, 1–15 42*n*20
5, 15–20 42*n*21
5, 20–24 42*n*22
5, 24–28 43*n*23
5, 27–28 43*n*24
5, 31–33 43*n*24
7, 4–8 43*n*25
7, 8–12 44*n*26
7, 12–19 44*n*28
8, 1–4 45*n*30
8, 4–8 45*n*31
8, 9–11 45*n*32
8, 14–20 45*n*33
9, 1–2 45*n*34
9, 4–9 45*n*35
9, 9–16 46*n*36
10, 1–3 46*n*38
10, 4–7 46*n*39
10, 10–11 47*n*40
10, 11–15 47*n*41
III 2 [47]
9, 2–3 49*n*49
10, 11–12 42*n*22
11, 9–12 117*n*3
III 4 [15]
III 4 [15] 91, 142
1, 1–3 91*n*50
1, 3–4 91*n*51
2, 6–8 91*n*52
2, 11–30 91*n*53
2, 16–30 91*n*53
3, 1–2 91*n*54
3, 3–8 92*n*57
3, 8–10 92*n*59
3, 22 4*n*20
4, 12 143*n*90
5, 1–4 93*n*61
5, 4–9 93*n*62
5, 19–23 93*n*64
6, 6 142*n*85
6, 22–23 4*n*20, 94*n*68
6, 25–26 94*n*69
III 5 [50]
2, 14–19 69*n*9
3, 25–26 73*n*33
8, 1–5 117*n*4
III 6 [26]
III 6 [26] 35*n*67
1, 12 117*n*4
11, 4 117*n*2
11, 7 117*n*2
III 7 [45]
III 7 [45] 123
1, 15 117*n*2
4, 32 117*n*4
6, 20 117*n*4
6, 22 117*n*4
7, 1–8 123*n*37
7, 15 117*n*4
7, 17 117*n*4
10, 10 117*n*2
13, 13 117*n*2
13, 16 117*n*2
IV 2 [4]
IV 2 [4] 24
1, 62–66 24*n*21
1, 68 25*n*22
1, 73–76 25*n*23
2, 4–11 25*n*24
IV 3 [27]
IV 3 [27] 13, 31, 34, 94*n*72, 96, 98
1, 1–4 13*n*94
1, 16–22 31*n*45
1, 22–26 31*n*46
4, 5–6 31*n*48
4, 21–25 31*n*49
4, 26–33 32*n*51
5, 1–5 33*n*54
5, 5–10 33*n*56
11, 15 117*n*4
21, 8 117*n*4
21, 12–20 22*n*8
21, 12–20, 11 22*n*7
21, 18 117*n*4
22, 1–23, 2 127*n*17
25, 1–5 96*n*81
25, 39–40 96*n*82
26-IV 4 [28] 9 23*n*18
26, 13–14 96*n*84
26, 52–56 96*n*85
26, 55–56 96*n*83

IV 3 [27] (*cont.*)
27, 1–3 96*n*86, 117*n*4
27, 3–6 97*n*90
27, 7–14 97*n*92
29, 22–24 98*n*97
30-IV 4 [28] 8 34*n*60
30, 5–11 62*n*126
31, 1–2 98*n*98
31, 2–8 98*n*99
31, 8–13 99*n*101
31, 13–14 99*n*102
31, 15–20 99*n*103
32, 1–4 100*n*105
31, 6–9 100*n*106
32, 1–6 102*n*114
32, 9–13 100*n*107
32, 10–22 99*n*104
32, 13–18 101*n*108
32, 24-IV 4 [28] 1, 1 101*n*109
IV 4 [28]
IV 4 [28] 13, 34, 94, 94*n*72, 96, 140
IV 3 [27] 26–IV 4 [28] 9 23*n*18
IV 3 [27] 30-IV 4 [28] 8 34*n*60
IV 3 [27] 32, 24-IV 4 [28] 1, 1 101*n*109
1, 1–4 102*n*110
1, 4–16 102*n*111
2, 1–11 102*n*112
3, 1–6 102*n*115, 102*n*117
4, 7–14 102*n*116
6, 13–15 34*n*61
7, 9–10 34*n*61
8, 60 117*n*4
8, 24–27 34*n*61
15, 10–13 34*n*62
16, 21 89*n*43
17, 1–3 35*n*63
17, 3–37 35*n*64
18, 6–9 35*n*65
18, 9–10 35*n*66
18, 10–15 36*n*69
18, 15–19 36*n*70
19, 26–29 140*n*78
24, 21–23 94*n*73
24, 25–28 95*n*74
25, 1–5 95*n*76
25, 5–7 95*n*77
25, 7–8 95*n*78
30, 17 117*n*4
30, 22 117*n*4
31, 23 117*n*4
36, 17 117*n*4
37, 6 117*n*4
IV 5 [29]
IV 5 [29] 13
IV 6 [41]
2, 6 117*n*4
IV 7 [2]
IV 7 [2] 21–22, 24
1, 1–4 21*n*2
1, 5–7 21*n*5
1, 8–19 22*n*9
1, 20–22 22*n*10
1, 22–25 22*n*11
5, 7–20 23*n*16
5, 20–24 23*n*17
10, 4–7 24*n*19
10, 7–11 24*n*20
IV 8 [6]
IV 8 [6] 3, 32, 79, 82, 82*n*17, 85, 117*n*2, 118
1, 1–7 118*n*5
1, 1–11 79*n*2
1, 11–17 118*n*7
1, 15–17 118*n*8
1, 20–23 119*n*10
1, 23–26 119*n*11
1, 26–28 119*n*12
1, 27–41 79*n*4
1, 29–50 119*n*13
1, 43–50 80*n*5
2, 1–4 80*n*6, 119*n*15
2, 7–8 80*n*7
2, 8–19 80*n*8
2, 19–24 81*n*9
2, 24–33 32*n*50, 81*n*10
3, 22–30 82*n*14
4, 5–28 75*n*44
4, 29–35 82*n*13
4, 31–35 4*n*5
5–7 81*n*11
5, 27–36 82*n*15
6, 6–16 81*n*12
7, 12–17 82*n*15

IV 8 [6] (*cont.*)
8, 1 4*n*21
8, 1–6 83*n*19
8, 6–11 84*n*23
8, 11–15 85*n*25
8, 14 4*n*22
IV 9 [8]
IV 9 [8] 26, 31*n*44, 104
1, 1–6 26*n*25
1, 6–13 26*n*26
1, 15–19 27*n*27
1, 20–21 27*n*28
1, 22–23 27*n*29
2, 1–6 27*n*30
2, 6–7 28*n*31
2, 7–8 28*n*32
2, 12–18 28*n*33
2, 18–21 28*n*34
2, 28–33 28*n*35
3, 1–3 29*n*36
3, 10–18 29*n*37
3, 18–19 29*n*38
3, 19–23 29*n*39
3, 23–29 30*n*41, 112*n*33
4, 6–8 117*n*4
5, 26–28 117*n*3
V 1 [10]
V 1 [10] 85, 90
1, 1–9 3
1, 1–35 86*n*27
2, 35–42 86*n*29
2, 44–47 86*n*32
10, 5–12 4*n*19, 87*n*34
10, 21–24 88*n*38
11, 4–10 88*n*41
11, 10–15 89*n*44
12, 1–12 89*n*45
V 3 [49]
V 3 [49] 62, 72, 78*n*59, 94*n*67, 123, 130, 133, 137*n*64
3, 14 72*n*24
3, 16–18 72*n*25
3, 21–22 72*n*26
3, 23–26 72*n*27
3, 26–29 72*n*29, 134*n*47
3, 29–32 73*n*30
3, 32–36 62*n*124, 73*n*32
3, 36–39 74*n*34
3, 40–43 74*n*36
3, 44–4, 4 75*n*39
3, 45–4, 1 75*n*43
4, 7–15 76*n*47
4, 15–20 76*n*48
4, 20–26 77*n*49
6, 1–4 77*n*51
6, 10–12 77*n*52
6, 12–15 77*n*54
6, 16–18 77*n*55
6, 18–22 77*n*56
8, 35–48 78*n*57
9, 23–24 78*n*58
13, 1 124*n*40
13, 5–6 124*n*39
14, 1–8 124*n*41
14, 8–13 124*n*43
14, 9 70*n*11
14, 13–15 124*n*44
V 6 [24]
1, 21 117*n*4
V 7 [18]
V 7 [18] 33*n*57
3, 12 117*n*3
V 8 [31]
10, 43–11, 3 70*n*11
V 9 [5]
V 9 [5] 120
1, 1–21 120*n*19
2, 1–2 120*n*20
2, 20–23 120*n*21
2, 23–27 120*n*22
5, 1–10 121*n*23
5, 10–11 121*n*24
8, 16–20 121*n*25
9, 1–3 121*n*25
13, 7–11 121*n*26
VI 1 [42]
1, 5 117*n*2
4, 53 117*n*4
6, 22 117*n*4
6, 29 117*n*4
6, 31 117*n*4
6, 34 117*n*4
6, 36 117*n*4
7, 8–10 117*n*4
7, 13 117*n*4
14, 7 117*n*4
14, 24 117*n*4

VI 2 [43]
1, 4–5 117*n*2
3, 23 117*n*4
3, 26 117*n*4
4, 29 117*n*4
7, 44 117*n*4
12, 4 117*n*4
17, 4 117*n*4
VI 3 [44]
1, 8 117*n*4
6, 7 117*n*4
9, 39 117*n*4
13, 21 117*n*4
20, 15 117*n*4
VI 4 [22]
VI 4 [22] 31*n*44, 104, 108
1, 30 117*n*4
2, 27 117*n*3
3, 27 117*n*4
4, 21 117*n*4
6, 5–13 105*n*4
6, 13–19 105*n*5
14, 1–2 105*n*6
14, 16–31 106*n*7
15, 18–23 107*n*10
15, 23–25 107*n*12
15, 35–38 107*n*13
VI 5 [23]
VI 5 [23] 104*n*1, 108, 122–123
1, 1–4 109*n*15
1, 9 109*n*19
1, 24–26 109*n*20
2, 7–9 122*n*33
5, 21 117*n*4
7, 1–6 109*n*21, 123*n*34
7, 6–8 123*n*36
7, 7 117*n*4
7, 9–11 110*n*23
VI 6 [34]
10, 48 117*n*4
10, 50 117*n*4
16, 8 117*n*2
16, 12 117*n*2
VI 7 [38]
6, 7–18 93*n*62
7, 8–16 112*n*33
34, 13–14 71*n*14
41, 22–25 136*n*60
VI 8 [39]
VI 8 [39] 47
1, 1–11 48*n*44
1, 13–16 48*n*45
1, 16–19 48*n*47
1, 20–21 48*n*48
1, 22–22 48*n*49
1, 33–34 49*n*53, 50*n*58
1, 36–38 51*n*61
2, 1–2 52*n*70
2, 2–8 52*n*72
2, 35–37 52*n*74
3, 2–8 53*n*75
3, 8–10 53*n*76
3, 10 117*n*4
3, 10–16 53*n*77
3, 17–24 54*n*80
3, 19 52*n*69
4, 7–26 54*n*84
4, 14 52*n*69
5, 1–3 54*n*85
5, 3–5 55*n*87
5, 6–8 55*n*89
5, 8–10 55*n*90
6, 26–31 55*n*93
7, 1–22 55*n*93
7, 17 52*n*69
8, 1 117*n*4
11, 17 117*n*4
12, 4–7 56*n*94
12, 8–11 56*n*95
12, 11–13 56*n*96
13, 18 52*n*69
15, 7 117*n*4
15, 15–17 57*n*97
15, 21–26 57*n*98
15, 32 117*n*4
VI 9 [9]
VI 9 [9] 66, 71–72, 89, 110, 124*n*45
1, 4–17 89*n*43
3, 49–54 67*n*3
8, 16–22 67*n*4
8, 33–45 68*n*5
8, 38–39, 2 110*n*24
9, 1–2 68*n*6
9, 7–11 68*n*8
9, 11–38 69*n*9
9, 38–46 69*n*10

VI 9 [9] (*cont.*)
9, 50–58 70*n*11
10, 14–17 70*n*12
10, 15–17 71*n*14
10, 18–19 71*n*16
10, 19–21 71*n*14
10, 20–21 71*n*15
11, 11–12 71*n*14
11, 12–13 70*n*11
11, 22–24 71*n*17
11, 38–42 71*n*14
11, 51 72*n*22

Porphyry
Vita Plotini
3, 35–38 12*n*88
4 12*n*81
8 12*n*80
13 13*n*89, 148*n*2

Proclus
ET
211 87*n*35
In Parm.
IV (948, 12–20) 87*n*35

Index of Names and Subjects

N.B.: Modern authors are not listed when they are mentioned as translators. For ancient authors see also index of ancient sources.

actuality 5, 82, 118, 142
Adamson, P. 3*n*8, 6*n*31, 91*n*48, 94*n*66, 143*n*90
agency 14*n*95, 47*n*42
aisthesis 84*n*22, 95, 95*n*75
Aleknienė, T. 71*n*18
Alt, K. 3*n*13
animal 17, 26–27, 30, 40, 44, 50, 57*n*100, 88, 91, 96, 97*n*89, 98, 112, 133, 140–141, 143
Annas, J. 18*n*8
Aristotle 2, 4–5, 5*n*25, 14*n*95, 15–16, 23, 33*n*55, 48–51, 53, 57*n*100, 63, 74, 96, 127, 127*n*16, 128, 128*n*19, 129*n*26, 147
Armstrong, A.H. 1, 6*n*31, 7*n*44, 8*n*47, 8*n*49, 11*n*74, 23*n*14, 30*n*40, 33*n*57, 41, 43*n*24, 50*n*60, 53*n*77, 55*n*91, 57*n*100, 70*n*13, 71*n*14, 73*n*31, 75*n*42, 81*n*11, 82*n*17, 84*n*22, 87*n*35, 112*n*33, 148*n*2, 150*n*9
Arp, R. 66*n*2
Atkinson, M. 6*n*31, 86*n*30, 89*n*41
Aubry, G. 6*n*31, 8*n*44, 10*n*63, 10*n*70, 15*n*101, 18*n*8, 125*n*1, 125*n*4, 126*n*10, 129*n*24–26, 130*n*26–27, 130*n*29–30, 132*n*40, 138*n*67, 139*n*72–74, 144*n*92, 145*n*94, 145*n*98
autos 6, 6*n*32, 11, 15*n*100, 18, 22–23, 23*n*14, 41, 58, 70, 89*n*41, 97, 105*n*4, 116, 131, 131*n*35, 133

Baltes, M. 83*n*18
Banner, N. 6*n*31, 8*n*47, 9*n*58
Barney, R. 14*n*95
Bartsch, S. 14*n*95
Beckermann, A. 15*n*97, 15*n*99
Beierwaltes, W. 3*n*7, 3*n*11, 12*n*85, 47*n*43, 65*n*139, 66*n*2, 71*n*14, 71*n*18, 72*n*22–23, 73*n*31, 75*n*42, 77*n*53, 79*n*2, 148*n*2
Berchman, R. 4*n*18, 8*n*47–48, 8*n*50, 9*n*53, 9*n*57, 15*n*101
Bertozzi, A. 33*n*57, 66*n*2, 79*n*2
Beutler, R. 21*n*4, 39*n*9, 41*n*17, 46*n*37, 73*n*31, 75*n*42, 83*n*18, 83*n*20, 88*n*39–40, 148*n*3
Bloch, D. 97*n*89
Blumenthal, H.J. 3*n*5–6, 3*n*8–9, 4*n*16, 4*n*18, 5, 5*n*25, 7*n*35–36, 10*n*66, 11*n*73, 11*n*77, 12*n*78–79, 12*n*81, 18*n*8, 32*n*52, 33*n*57, 35*n*65, 35*n*67, 66*n*2, 73*n*31, 75*n*39, 75*n*42, 102*n*116, 102*n*118
Bobzien, S. 49*n*50, 53*n*78, 54*n*81, 54*n*84
Bolton, R. 6*n*31
Bonazzi, M. 57*n*99, 60*n*116, 65*n*138
Borodai, T.I. 3*n*13
Bréhier, É. 6*n*29, 46*n*37
Brisson, L. 22*n*6, 22*n*12, 23*n*14, 30*n*40, 31*n*45–46, 32*n*53, 33*n*57, 35*n*67, 38*n*3, 38*n*6, 39*n*9, 43*n*24, 44*n*27, 46*n*37, 96, 96*n*87, 102*n*118
Brunner, F. 85*n*26
Bussanich, J. 3*n*7, 66*n*2, 79*n*2

Caluori, D. 3*n*6, 3*n*8, 4*n*18, 5*n*25, 5*n*28, 8*n*44, 31*n*42, 33*n*58, 97*n*93, 130*n*29, 135*n*54
Cary, P. 14*n*95
Chiaradonna, R. 10*n*70, 15*n*102, 78*n*57, 79*n*2, 83*n*20
choice 45, 49–51, 54, 91–93, 115
Clark, S. 6*n*31, 66*n*1, 138*n*70
consciousness 2, 4, 4*n*18, 6, 6*n*31, 7, 8*n*48, 9–11, 19, 28, 60–63, 65–66, 71, 74, 79, 84–85, 89–91, 94–95, 104–105, 117, 124, 141–144, 146, 149
  fluctuating spotlight of consciousness 10, 10*n*64
Corrigan, K. 47*n*43, 48*n*44, 48*n*46, 49*n*50, 50*n*54, 51*n*63, 52*n*71, 52*n*73, 53*n*77, 53*n*79, 54*n*82–83, 54*n*86, 55*n*88, 55*n*92, 56*n*95, 71*n*18, 72*n*22, 117*n*100
Cory, T.S. 149*n*7
Crone, K. 149*n*8

D'Ancona, C. 4*n*14, 4*n*18, 6*n*31, 8*n*44, 32*n*50, 79*n*1–2, 81*n*10, 83*n*18, 118*n*7, 199*n*10, 119*n*13
daimôn (daemon, allotted guardian spirit) 17–18, 88, 91–94
Damascius 14*n*95

Denyer, N. 19*n*15
destiny 38, 113, 115
Dillon, J.M.
Dodds, E.R. 4*n*23, 6*n*31, 10, 10*n*64, 10*n*66, 71*n*14, 71*n*18–19, 148, 148*n*5
Dörrie, H. 75*n*42, 83*n*18
Dufour, R. 3*n*9

ego 6, 6*n*31, 7–8, 8*n*44, 8*n*47–48, 10, 10*n*64, 15*n*100, 117*n*1
  Floating ego 10
Eliasson, E. 38*n*1, 39*n*9, 44*n*29, 47*n*43, 48*n*46, 50*n*60
Emanation 82*n*17
Emilsson, E.K. 3*n*6–7, 5*n*28, 6*n*31, 7*n*39, 7*n*42, 8*n*44, 9*n*57, 35*n*67–68, 44*n*90, 55*n*92, 75*n*40, 79*n*2, 104*n*1, 104*n*3, 105*n*4, 105*n*6, 106*n*8–9, 108*n*14, 109*n*16, 131*n*36, 132*n*38
emotion 1*n*2, 2, 4–5, 27, 29, 42, 45, 55, 67, 90, 100, 105, 108, 112, 114, 142, 148
Empedocles 118
eph'hêmin (cf. also up to us, in our power) 44*n*29, 47*n*43, 48, 50, 50*n*60, 51, 51*n*69, 52, 52*n*69, 53*n*78, 55, 55*n*90, 55*n*93
Epictetus 49
Er, myth of (see also relevant passages from the *Republic* listed in the index of Ancient Authors) 92, 115
ergon 41–42, 82
Erler, M. 64*n*136
eudaimonia, eudaimonein (cf. happiness) 57*n*100, 62
Euripides 109
evil 3*n*11, 51, 54*n*82, 82, 82*n*16, 87, 93, 113

fate 38–39, 41, 41*n*17, 44, 48*n*44, 49–50, 116
Ferwerda, R. 89*n*43
Flasch, K. 148*n*4
Fleet, B. 21*n*1, 22*n*12, 23*n*14, 79*n*1–2, 118*n*7
fortune 60
Fronterotta, F. 88*n*39–40

Gallaher, S. 149*n*8
Gerson, L.P. 3*n*7, 4*n*18, 6*n*31–32, 7*n*33, 7*n*44, 8*n*50, 9*n*51, 23*n*14, 33*n*57, 35*n*68, 47*n*43, 102*n*113
Gill, C. 14*n*95
Gnostics 3–4, 83, 83*n*18
god/God 17, 18*n*9, 49, 48*n*44, 68, 70, 70*n*11, 79, 86, 86*n*30, 88–89, 89*n*43, 90–91, 98, 105, 108–109, 111, 114, 117*n*4, 133–134
Griffin, M. 19*n*16
Gritti, E. 63*n*129
Gurtler, G.M. 3*n*9, 4*n*18, 5, 5*n*26, 6*n*31, 7*n*36, 8*n*44, 9*n*55, 10*n*68, 11*n*72, 15*n*101–102, 42*n*20, 104*n*3, 105*n*4, 136*n*58
Guyot, M. 87*n*35

Hades 97
Hadot, P. 4*n*22, 6*n*31, 8*n*46, 12*n*83–84, 66*n*1–2, 70*n*11, 71*n*14, 71*n*20–21, 79*n*2, 83*n*20, 90*n*46
Halfwassen, J. 7*n*43
Ham, B. 6*n*31, 9*n*56, 10*n*62–63, 72*n*23, 72*n*28, 73*n*31, 74*n*35, 75, 75*n*42–43, 76, 76*n*45–46, 77*n*50, 77*n*53, 145*n*97
happiness (cf. *eudaimonia*) 29, 57, 57*n*100, 58, 60, 113
Harder, R. 21*n*4, 23*n*14, 30*n*40, 39*n*9, 41*n*15, 41*n*17, 43*n*24, 46*n*37, 50*n*60, 55, 73*n*31, 75*n*42, 83*n*18, 83*n*20, 84*n*22, 86*n*30, 88*n*39–40, 148*n*3
Hêkousion 50–51, 51–52*n*69
Helleman-Elgersma, W. 3*n*147
hêmeis 1–2, 6, 6*n*31, 10*n*70, 11, 14–15, 15*n*100, 15*n*102, 16, 25, 28, 36, 38–39, 41–42, 43*n*24, 45, 72–73, 76, 79, 85, 91, 105, 112, 115, 117, 120, 125, 130–131, 133, 136–140, 144*n*92, 145, 145*n*94, 148
Henry, P. 87*n*35, 148*n*2
Heracles 97–98, 101, 103
Heraclitus 79, 86, 118
Himmerich, W. 6*n*31, 131*n*34
Hoffmann, P. 12*n*85–86
Homer/Homeric 17, 97, 98, 101
Horn, C. 7*n*43, 11*n*76, 12*n*87, 13*n*93, 48*n*44, 51*n*68, 72*n*23
Hutchinson, D.M. 4*n*18, 6*n*31, 9*n*56, 47*n*42, 102*n*116
hypostasis/hypostaseis 3, 148*n*5

I/Ich 6*n*31, 15, 15*n*97, 26–27, 71, 149
Iamblichus 14*n*95
identity 6*n*31, 7, 7*n*36, 8*n*44, 8*n*48, 9, 9*n*53, 9*n*57, 10, 70*n*13, 97, 133, 149
Igal, J. 12*n*82, 73*n*31, 125*n*2
illumination 142–143

image of the soul (trace, shadow, *indalma*, *eidôlon*) 5, 5*n*28, 9*n*57, 10*n*64, 35, 43, 94, 97, 97*n*93, 98, 101, 106, 110, 112, 115–116, 130*n*26, 143
imagination (cf. also *phantasia*) 4, 4*n*18, 5, 35*n*64, 53, 62, 74–75, 84, 90, 95, 98, 98*n*100, 99, 136
in our power (cf. also *eph'hêmin*, up to us) 44, 46–49, 51–56
intellection 9, 9*n*57, 10*n*64, 35, 62, 73, 76, 98, 102, 132, 137, 138, 141, 145
Inwood, B. 14*n*95, 55*n*88

Jonas, H. 3*n*13, 4*n*22

Kalligas, P. 5*n*28, 8*n*44, 10, 10*n*71, 11*n*72, 32*n*51, 33*n*57, 38*n*1, 59*n*111, 69*n*9, 91*n*49, 112*n*33, 113*n*36, 125*n*1
Karamanolis, G. 4*n*16
Karfík, F. 3*n*6, 4*n*16, 5*n*25, 9*n*52, 31*n*42–43, 112*n*33
Katz, J. 3*n*13
King, R.A.H. 96*n*80
Kobusch, T. 12*n*86, 149*n*8
kyrios/kyrioi 50*n*60, 51, 51*n*63, 52, 52*n*69, 56

Lang, W. 75*n*40
Laurent, J. 3*n*10–11, 15*n*102, 38*n*3, 38*n*6, 39*n*9, 43*n*23–24, 44*n*27, 46*n*37, 58*n*105, 91*n*53, 140*n*79–80
Lavaud, L. 48*n*44, 48*n*46, 49*n*51, 50*n*54, 50*n*60, 51*n*68–69, 53*n*79, 82*n*16, 84*n*22, 118*n*7, 118*n*9
Leroux, G. 47*n*43, 50*n*54, 50*n*60, 52*n*71, 52*n*73, 54*n*82, 55*n*88, 56*n*95
Lloyd, A.C. 18*n*9
Long, A. 6*n*31, 9*n*55, 17*n*3

magic 60, 62
Mamo, P. 6*n*31, 66*n*2, 71*n*14
Markschies, C. 7*n*34, 18*n*7, 88*n*37
Marzolo, C. 129*n*25
matter 3, 3*n*11, 127, 130*n*26
Mazilu, D. 71*n*18
Meijer, P.A. 66*n*1–2, 71*n*18
memory/memories 4, 4*n*18, 5, 10*n*68, 23, 23*n*18, 34, 96–103, 122
moi 6*n*31, 9*n*56
Morel, P.-M. 2*n*4, 75*n*40, 136*n*61
Mortley, R. 6*n*31, 76*n*45
Moutsopoulos, E. 4*n*18
Müller, C.W. 91*n*51, 123*n*38

Narbonne, J.-M. 3*n*11, 3*n*13, 4*n*22, 10*n*65, 10*n*69, 83*n*18
Nauck, A. 109*n*18
necessity 38, 41–42, 44–45, 48*n*44, 114–115, 127
Nickl, P. 149*n*8
Nikulin, D. 31*n*43, 96*n*80
Noble, C.I. 5*n*28, 41*n*17
nous 3, 4*n*16, 8*n*48, 9*n*53, 73, 74*n*37, 75*n*42, 77, 85, 109, 132–133

O'Brien, D. 3*n*11, 4*n*22, 82*n*16
O'Daly, G.J.P.
O'Meara, D. 3*n*7, 12*n*86, 71*n*14, 79*n*2, 118*n*5, 124*n*42
Odysseus 101, 120
One, the 3, 3*n*7, 3*n*11, 4, 8, 12, 19, 47–48, 68–72, 82*n*17, 87–90, 124, 134, 149
Opsomer, J. 19*n*16
ours, not ours 19, 23, 26, 36–38–39, 42–43, 72–74, 77, 93–94, 132, 134–135, 140, 145
Ousager, A. 6*n*31

passion 1*n*2, 41*n*71, 24*n*20, 27, 29, 35, 42–43, 46–49, 54, 59, 62, 95, 100, 108, 112–115, 128, 138, 140, 143, 148
Pépin, J. 97*n*91
Perl, E.D. 85*n*26, 86*n*30, 89*n*41, 90*n*46
person 6, 6*n*31, 8*n*47, 9, 15*n*100, 117*n*1, 149, 149*n*8
  first person singular/plural 15, 56, 68, 117–118, 149, 149*n*7
personality 6*n*31, 7, 9, 10*n*66, 26, 97
Peterson, E. 72*n*22
phantasia/phantastikon (cf. also imagination) 53*n*77, 74
Philo of Alexandria 53
plants 26–27, 30, 40, 57*n*100, 91, 112
Plass, P. 130*n*32
Plato 1, 3, 13, 14*n*95, 16–19, 40, 51*n*63, 53, 79–80, 83*n*18, 87–88, 93, 106–107, 119, 137*n*63, 141
Porphyry 47, 91

potentiality/potentially 5, 121, 127, 127*n*19, 130*n*26, 142
Pradeau, J.-F. 10*n*69, 22*n*6, 22*n*12, 23*n*14, 30*n*40
Proclus 18*n*8
prohairesis (see also resolution) 49
Puech, H.-C. 3*n*13, 4*n*22
Pythagoras 118

Rappe, S. 6*n*31, 15*n*101
reincarnation 3, 64, 91, 91*n*53, 143
Remes, P. 2*n*3, 3*n*12, 4*n*23, 6*n*30–31, 7*n*36–37, 8*n*44, 8*n*47, 9*n*54, 10*n*61, 14*n*95, 15*n*102, 18*n*14, 33*n*57, 60*n*113, 70*n*13, 97, 97*n*95, 112*n*33, 149*n*6
resolution (see also *prohairesis*) 41, 93
responsibility 19, 41, 41*n*17, 42, 46–47, 93*n*62, 135, 138, 141, 143
Reydams-Schils, G. 14*n*95
Rich, A.N.M. 3*n*10, 91*n*53
Richter, A. 7*n*43
Rist, J.M. 33*n*57, 66*n*2, 71*n*20, 82*n*16, 83*n*18, 83*n*20
Rizzerio, L. 4*n*18

sage (see also *spoudaios*) 10*n*71, 57–60, 60*n*113, 62–65, 110
Schibli, H.S. 6*n*31, 7*n*41, 7*n*43–44
Schniewind, A. 4*n*15, 6*n*31, 57*n*99, 58*n*105, 60*n*113, 82*n*13, 120*n*19, 121*n*27
Schroeder, F.M. 4*n*18, 6*n*32, 7*n*38, 17*n*3, 95*n*75, 97*n*91
Schuhl, P.M. 3*n*11
Schwyzer, H.-R. 4*n*18, 6*n*31, 10*n*64, 11*n*75, 12*n*80–81, 13*n*91–92, 15*n*98, 46*n*37, 148*n*2, 148*n*5
self-consciousness 8*n*48, 94, 149
self pass.
  embodied/endowed/historical/empirical self 7–8, 7*n*44, 9, 102*n*113
  ethical subject 19, 37–38, 41–42, 44, 66, 115, 117, 135
  pseudo-self 8*n*47
  true self/ideal/higher/intelligible/transcendent/primary/real self 7–8, 8*n*44, 8*n*47, 9, 10*n*71, 17*n*1, 18*n*9, 23*n*14, 102*n*113
  selves 9*n*55–56, 14*n*95, 102*n*113, 117*n*1, 149
  universal self 8*n*50
Seneca 14*n*95
sense-perception 4, 9*n*57, 10, 19, 25, 27–30, 57, 57*n*100, 59, 61–62, 66, 73, 73*n*31, 74–75, 75*n*40, 83–84, 89–92, 94–97, 97*n*89, 98, 103–104, 108, 125–126, 128–132, 132*n*38, 135, 135*n*54, 136, 139, 148, 149, 149*n*6
Shields, C. 17*n*4
Sihvola, J. 14*n*95, 33*n*55
Smith, A. 4*n*18, 6*n*31, 7*n*44, 10*n*65, 60*n*113
Socrates 17–18, 32–34, 51, 64, 144, 170
Sorabji, R. 6*n*31, 7*n*40, 8*n*44, 9*n*56, 10, 10*n*67, 14*n*95, 17*n*1, 19*n*17, 33*n*57
soul
  immortality 1, 3, 17, 21–22, 64, 126
  sensitive soul (cf. also sense-perception) 4, 89, 140*n*8
  soul as "amphibian" 4, 82
  undescended soul/undescended part of the soul 65, 83, 98, 142
  vegetative soul/growth-principle/nutritive soul 2, 4, 5*n*28, 29–30, 30*n*40, 61, 67, 91, 96, 96*n*87, 108, 112
  world-soul (soul of the All, soul of the universe) 2–3, 3*n*8, 5*n*28, 1224*n*19, 26–27, 30–32, 43, 75, 79–81, 85, 87, 94, 96, 112, 114, 116, 120, 130*n*26, 134, 143
spoudaios (see also sage) 47, 57*n*99, 58, 58*n*105, 60, 62
Stamatellos, G. 8*n*44, 52*n*74
Stang, C.M. 4*n*23, 6*n*31, 8*n*44, 9*n*56, 15*n*96, 15*n*102, 33*n*57, 117*n*1
star 3, 3*n*8, 29, 39, 46, 86, 86*n*30, 87, 94, 94*n*71, 113–115
Steel, C. 4*n*22–23, 14*n*95
Stern-Gillet, S. 4*n*18, 8*n*44, 10*n*63, 15*n*101
Stock, W.-M. 6*n*31, 35*n*64, 69*n*9, 81*n*11, 83*n*20, 87*n*33, 87*n*35, 91*n*48–49, 91*n*51, 91*n*53–54, 92*n*55–56, 92*n*60, 93*n*62–63, 94*n*66, 94*n*71, 95*n*75, 96*n*80, 98*n*100, 100*n*105, 102*n*116, 103*n*119, 109*n*18, 119*n*14, 120*n*16, 120*n*18, 138*n*69, 142*n*85, 143*n*90, 149*n*8
Stolzenberg, J. 148*n*8
Strange, S.K. 6*n*31, 8*n*44, 104*n*1, 104*n*3, 106*n*8–9, 108*n*14, 109*n*16
subject/sujet 6, 6*n*31, 4*n*47–48, 4*n*50, 10, 10*n*68, 10*n*70, 11*n*72, 19, 37–38, 41–42, 44, 66, 76, 115, 117, 122, 125, 128130, 133, 135–136, 144, 144*n*92, 145, 145*n*94, 147, 149–150

Sweeney, L. 15*n*100
synaisthêsis (see also self-consciousness) 95, 95*n*75
Szlezák, T.A. 4*n*22, 6*n*31, 8*n*45, 9*n*59, 83*n*18, 83*n*20, 145*n*97

Taormina, D.P. 4*n*18, 5*n*28, 75*n*40–42, 130*n*26
Tardieu, M. 3*n*13
Taylor, C. 149*n*8
theos 70, 109
Thesleff, H. 79*n*2
theurgy/theurgic 4, 83
Tornau, C. 5*n*28, 8*n*45, 9*n*52, 15*n*102, 68*n*7, 82*n*14, 88*n*39, 89*n*43, 104*n*1, 108*n*14, 109*n*17–18, 110*n*22, 122*n*32, 130*n*28, 145*n*96
Trouillard, J. 6*n*31, 10*n*62, 10*n*69, 66*n*2, 71*n*14, 71*n*19, 102*n*118
Turner, J.D. 47*n*43, 48*n*44, 48*n*46, 49*n*50, 50*n*54, 50*n*60, 51*n*63, 52*n*71, 52*n*73, 53*n*77, 53*n*79, 54*n*82–83, 54*n*86, 55*n*88, 55*n*92, 56*n*95, 117*n*1

unconscious 60–91, 63, 71, 85, 89–90, 92, 102, 142, 149
up to us (cf. also *eph'hêmin*, in our power) 56

van den Berg, R.M. 18*n*8
Vassilopoulou, P. 8*n*36
voluntary 47, 49–50, 54
Vorwerk, M. 120*n*19

Warren, E.W. 4*n*18, 6*n*30, 6*n*32, 10*n*66, 96*n*80, 98*n*100
Wilberding, J. 112*n*32
Wolfe, K. 7*n*36, 31*n*43, 34*n*59
Wray, D. 14*n*95

The Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus invites us to take part in his philosophizing when he encourages his readers to think about what they think they are, as living beings, human beings, as rational beings, ethical subjects and as philosophers. He is interested in what we say about ourselves in ordinary language and notices that such ordinary experience conflicts with what the Platonic tradition claims we (truly) are. This conflict does not lead him to turn away from the human terms and expressions, but impels him to take seriously what we say about ourselves and to explain it philosophically.

Wiebke-Marie Stock, (Universität Bonn, Germany; University of Notre Dame, USA) works on ancient philosophy with a focus on Plato and the Platonic tradition. Her publications include *Plotinus. Ennead III 4. On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit* (2020) and *Theurgisches Denken. Zur "Kirchlichen Hierarchie" des Dionysius Areopagita* (2008).

ISBN 978-90-04-67864-4

BRILL.COM/SPNP
ISSN 1871-188X

STUDIES IN PLATONISM, NEOPLATONISM, AND THE PLATONIC TRADITION